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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Alone with Beauty. By <i>Norah Friend</i>	129
And No Ghost Walks. By <i>M. A. Pearl</i>	380
Aran Islands, The. By <i>C. C. Vyvyan</i>	328
'As a Flower of the Field.' By <i>C. M. Mallet</i>	425
Bandit and the Bullion, The. By <i>Willard Price</i>	661
Bay, <i>Awai</i> : A Frontier Incident	218
Ben Jonson, Rare. By <i>A. E. Snodgrass</i>	237
Bingley, <i>Barbara</i> : The Return	677
Birding, The Gentle Art of. By <i>James W. Lane</i>	369
Birthday Ode, A. By <i>Aimée Cadell</i>	636
Blyton, <i>W. J.</i> : Voices from Old Furrows	793
Brunton, <i>Paul</i> : Western Thought and Eastern Culture	727
Butterflies of High Summer, Some. By <i>Lt.-Col. A. H. E. Mosse,</i> <i>C.I.E.</i>	60
By the Way	137, 282, 426, 570, 713, 856
<i>Cadell, Aimée</i> : A Birthday Ode	636
<i>Cameron, Clare</i> : Walking Home	267
<i>Campbell, Violet</i> : Duplicity of Mr. Krantz	78
Caroni. By <i>C. W. Wardlaw</i>	846
Cask, The. By <i>Lt.-Com. E. H. Crebbin</i>	645
Centaur, The. By <i>Margaret Stanley-Wrench</i>	378
Central Australia at Sunset. By <i>Theodora Roscoe</i>	569
Chapman's Homer. By <i>George G. Loane</i>	637
Children at Home and at School, Our. By <i>Irene M. Ironside</i>	514
<i>Clark, Doris N.</i> : The Seeker	791
<i>Cooke, Lucia M.</i> : M. the Curé's Preferment	112
Countess Charming. By <i>Marie W. Stuart</i>	64
<i>Crebbin, Lt.-Com. E. H.</i> : The Cask	645
<i>Cross, R.</i> : The Soliloquy of Li Chang	531
'Cruden's Concordance' (1737-1937). By <i>The Hon. Ralph Shirley</i>	741

	PAGE
Dark Horses. By <i>Eden Phillpotts</i> : IX-X	30
— — — XI-XIII	189
— — — XIV-XVI	341
— — — XVII-XIX	482
— — — XX-XXII	609
— — — XXIII-end	748
Dead Love. By <i>M. Newton</i>	121
<i>Donaldson, W. A.</i> : 'See-saw, Ma-Li-Li-Law'	230
Dru, An Episode on the. By <i>C. F. Meade</i>	417
Drug Smugglers of Egypt, The. By <i>C. S. Jarvis</i>	588
Duplicity of Mr. Krantz. By <i>Violet Campbell</i>	78
Eigerwand, The Attempts on the. By <i>C. F. Meade</i>	268
Epics of the Alps. By <i>C. F. Meade</i> . I. The Attempts on the Eigerwand	268
— — — II. An Episode on the Dru	417
Escape. By <i>I. Foulis</i>	340
<i>Eyre, Frank</i> : In Spring	188
<i>Fairfax, Griffyth</i> : Requiem	828
Father Fleming and Pope Leo XIII. By <i>Mrs. William O'Brien</i>	122
<i>Fergusson, James</i> : The Laird's Books	90
<i>Ferrar, W. J.</i> : The Rector	554
<i>ffettyplace, Anthony</i> : The Valley Revisited	76
— — — Hallucination	829
<i>Fleming, Edward Vandermere</i> : An Old Man's Counsel	59
<i>Forrester, Harold</i> : Mr. Gillespie	413
<i>Foulis, I.</i> : Escape	340
Friend Believed Beggared, To a. By <i>A. V. Stuart</i>	678
<i>Friend, Norah</i> : Alone with Beauty	129
Frontier Incident, A. By <i>Aval Bay</i>	218
Garden of Remembrance, A. By <i>C. M. Mallet</i>	813
George IV visited Ireland, When. By <i>H. Montgomery Hyde</i>	805
<i>Gibbins, John</i> : The Rural Pen	74
Gillespie, Mr. By <i>Harold Forester</i>	413
Golden Earrings. By <i>Calvert Rush</i>	248
<i>Gorell, Lord</i> : Solitude	513
— — — Homunculus	605
<i>Gray, W. Forbes</i> : The Select Society	679

	PAGE
Hallucination. By <i>Anthony ffettyplace</i>	829
<i>Higginson, M. D.</i> : Paradox	254
Homunculus. By <i>Lord Gorell</i>	605
<i>Hyde, H. Montgomery</i> : When George IV visited Ireland	805.
In Spring. By <i>Frank Eyre</i>	188
<i>Ironside, Irene M.</i> : Our Children at Home and at School . . .	514
<i>Jackson, G. S.</i> : Sophy's Lament	379
<i>Jarvis, C. S.</i> : The Drug Smugglers of Egypt.	588
King, Of Poor Mr., John Milton, and Certain Friends. By <i>Sir Charles Oman</i>	577
Laird's Books, The. By <i>James Fergusson</i>	90
<i>Lane, James W.</i> : The Gentle Art of Birding	369
<i>Lang, E. G. Temple</i> : His Mother to Baby John	775
<i>Lawrence, C. E.</i> : The Vanished Cockney	97
— — — Manners	814
Learning to Ride a Hobby. By <i>Prof. John M. McBryde</i>	255
<i>Letts, W. M.</i> : Questing for Flowers	260
<i>Leveson Gower, Sir George</i> : Miss Nolan	532
<i>Lewin, Brig.-Gen. H. F. E. and Lady Edvina</i> : 1914: August 15-31 .	145
— — — 1914: September	289
— — — 1914: October	433
Literary Competition 144, 288, 432, 576, 720, 864	
<i>Loane, George G.</i> : Chapman's Homer	637
'London Calling': I. Before the Coronation. By <i>Lucile Braken-</i> <i>ridge Till</i>	I
— — — II. During and After. By <i>Edith Sturgis</i>	5
<i>McBryde, Prof. John M.</i> : Learning to Ride a Hobby	255
<i>MacGregor, Alasdair Alpin</i> : Monach	776
<i>Mallet, C. M.</i> : 'As a Flower of the Field'	425
— — — A Garden of Remembrance	813
Manners. By <i>C. E. Lawrence</i>	814
Masefield, John: Poet Laureate. By <i>Herbert Palmer</i>	468
<i>Meade, C. F.</i> : Epics of the Alps: I. The Attempts on the Eigerwand	268
— — — II. An Episode on the Dru	417
<i>Melland, Frank</i> : Rabinck	172

	PAGE
'Mc um White Mary'. By <i>Cappy Ricks</i>	130
Monach. By <i>Alasdair Alpin MacGregor</i>	776
Monkey, The. By <i>Horace Thorogood</i>	126
M. the Curé's Preferment. By <i>Lucia M. Cooke</i>	112
Moon Ghost, The. By <i>Julian Temyson</i>	510
Morton, J. Ralph : Moukden : The Changing City	464
Mosse, Lt.-Col. A. H. E., C.I.E. : Some Butterflies of High Summer	60
Mostyn, Anita : A Woman on the Gold Coast	402
Mother. . By <i>Cedric Wallis</i>	548
Mother to Baby John, His. By <i>E. G. Temple Lang</i>	775
Moukden : The Changing City. By <i>J. Ralph Morton</i>	464
 Newton, M. : Dead Love	 121
N'Gwenya : The Saga of a Crocodile. By <i>Denis Townley</i>	691
Nichols, Wallace B. : Symbolic Masque	721
Nightingale, The. By <i>F. C. Price</i>	29
1914 : August 15-31. By <i>Brig.-Gen. H. F. E. and Lady Edwina Lewin</i>	145
— — — September	289
— — — October	433
'No Business of Mine.' By <i>Robert Verrier</i>	556
Nolan, Miss. By <i>Sir George Leveson Gower</i>	532
 O'Brien, Mrs. William : Father Fleming and Pope Leo XIII	 122
Old Man's Counsel, An. By <i>Edward Vandermere Fleming</i>	59
Oman, Sir Charles : Of Poor Mr. King, John Milton, and Certain Friends	577
Ossory, Lord : A Slandrous Bishop	395
 Palmer, Herbert : John Masefield : Poet Laureate	 468
Paradox. By <i>M. D. Higginson</i>	254
Peart, M. A. : And No Ghost Walks	380
Phillpotts, Eden : Dark Horses : IX-X	30
— — — XI-XIII	189
— — — XIV-XVI	341
— — — XVII-XIX	482
— — — XX-XXII	609
— — — XXIII-end	748
Powys, Llewelyn : Fair Rosamund	534
Price, F. C. : The Nightingale	29
Price, Willard : The Bandit and the Bullion	661

	PAGE
Questing for Flowers. By <i>W. M. Letts</i>	260
Rabinek. By <i>Frank Melland</i>	172
Rector, The. By <i>W. J. Ferrar</i>	554
Requiem. By <i>Griffyth Fairfax</i>	828
Requiescat in Pace. By <i>Janetta Reynolds</i>	412
Return, The. By <i>Barbara Bingley</i>	677
<i>Reynolds, Janetta</i> : Requiescat in Pace	412
<i>Ricks, Cappy</i> : 'Me um White Mary'	130
Rosamund, Fair. By <i>Llewelyn Powys</i>	534
<i>Roscoe, Theodora</i> : Central Australia at Sunset	569
Rural Pen, The. By <i>John Gibbins</i>	74
<i>Rush, Calvert</i> : Golden Earrings	248
Seeker, The. By <i>Doris N. Clark</i>	791
'See-saw, Ma-Li-Li-Law.' By <i>W. A. Donaldson</i>	230
Select Society, The. By <i>W. Forbes Gray</i>	679
<i>Shirley, The Hon. Ralph</i> : 'Cruden's Concordance' (1737-1937)	741
<i>Snodgrass, A. E.</i> : Rare Ben Jonson	237
Soliloquy of Li Chang, The. By <i>R. Cross</i>	531
Solitude. By <i>Lord Gorell</i>	513
Sophy's Lament. By <i>G. S. Jackson</i>	379
Slandorous Bishop, A. By <i>Lord Ossory</i>	395
<i>Stanley-Wrench, Margaret</i> : The Centaur	378
<i>Strong, L. A. G.</i> : <i>W. B. Yeats</i> : An Appreciation	14
<i>Stuart, A. V.</i> : To a Friend Believed Beggared	678
<i>Stuart, Marie W.</i> : Countess Charming	64
<i>Sturgis, Edith</i> : 'London Calling': II. During and After the Coronation	5
Symbolic Masque. By <i>Wallace B. Nichols</i>	721
<i>Tennyson, Julian</i> : The Moon Ghost	510
<i>Thorogood, Horace</i> : The Monkey	126
<i>Till, Lucile Brakenridge</i> : 'London Calling': I. Before the Coronation	1
<i>Townley, Denis</i> : N'Gwenya: The Saga of a Crocodile	691
Valley Revisited, The. By <i>Anthony ffettyplace</i>	76
Vanished Cockney, The. By <i>C. E. Lawrence</i>	97
<i>Verrier, Robert</i> : 'No Business of Mine'	556

	PAGE
Voices from Old Furrows. By <i>W. J. Blyton</i>	793
<i>Vyvyan, C. C.</i> : The Aran Islands	328
Walking Home. By <i>Clare Cameron</i>	267
<i>Wallis, Cedric</i> : Mother	548
<i>Wardlaw, C. W.</i> : Caroni	846
Western Thought and Eastern Culture. By <i>Paul Brunton</i>	727
Woman on the Gold Coast, A. By <i>Anita Mostyn</i>	402
Yeats, W. B. : An Appreciation. By <i>L. A. G. Strong</i>	14

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JULY 1937.

‘LONDON CALLING.’

I—L FORE THE CORONATION.

BY LUCILE BAKER KENRIDGE TILL.

‘LONDON calling the continent of North America ! London calling Newfoundland ! London calling Canada !’

At the time of King George’s Silver Jubilee I sat with rapt attention at the radio listening to London calling the colonies of the British Empire all over the world, and to the colonies answering the call. Fervently I hoped and prayed to hear the voice ringing out across the sea :

‘London calling the United States of America !’

When the call never came my feeling of disappointment and desolation was as acute as that of a child whose mother has shown discrimination against him, favouritism and partiality to other children.

‘We’ were ‘left out’ !

If there were no technical reason why London should call us on that occasion, certainly there was a deeper-lying emotional reason why she should. What did Hindus, Egyptians, or other outlandish alien races know of love for old England ? In the case of most of them the feeling they had was more likely to be that of hate, and surely nothing more friendly than indifference. But we Americans of English descent—how truly English we are ! Love of England is as much a part of my life as religion and patriotism.

When King George V came to the microphone to address his subjects scattered throughout the Empire on which the

sun never sets I felt that he was speaking to me, for I was responsive to his every word, expression, sentiment. I felt a love and loyalty to the noble Sovereign unfelt by many subjects who by their very racial strains could not be kindred spirits to that lofty soul. I felt that he was truly a great King in that most kingly quality, kindness. There was a ring of sincerity in his voice and deep reverence when he spoke of a Heavenly power and affirmed his faith in God. I recalled having heard that he read the Bible and prayed every day, and the result of his daily communion with God was evident, for only a deeply religious man could speak as King George spoke.

A few months later I rose at three o'clock on a bitter cold winter morning to attend in spirit the funeral services for Britain's beloved Monarch. Over the radio came every detail of the sad ceremonies. The British Empire had lost a ruler, America had lost a friend.

To me there is no more conflict in my love for America and England than there could ever again be a conflict between our two countries.

The sight of the Stars and Stripes and the sound of the music of the 'Star Spangled Banner' so thrill me that my feeling of love and loyalty for Old Glory cannot be expressed. At meetings of patriotic societies and on other public occasions I give the pledge of allegiance to the Flag and each time experience anew a spiritual glow of exaltation and a feeling of deep pride in this beautiful emblem for which my forefathers fought and died.

When America is being sung and we come to the line, 'Land where my fathers died,' I cannot utter a sound, my voice is choked, my eyes fill with tears, I tremble, and electric tingles run through my body. For so many generations has my family been in America that the ancestor who

arrived latest, in 1727, seems something of a new-comer. Most of them were arriving on these shores between the dates 1635 and 1650. America has been to me indeed for over ten generations the 'Land where my fathers died.'

But what about those ancestors of the ones who emigrated westward? Back, back, back they go to the Magna Charta which they wrested by moral and physical force from a tyrannical king; to the Garter Knights with their deeds of valour and gallantry; to men of dim antiquity. Peering back at them through the intervening centuries I see them as they live and move and have their being. They are real! I can feel the mental, moral, and physical environment in which they are living, yes, breathe the very English air. As I now look backward toward them, were they then looking forward toward me? Did they bequeath to me along with all their other traits and emotions this overwhelming love of England?

True, we broke away from England politically in 1776 and I am as proud of my Revolutionary ancestors who fought the Red Coats as I am of their and my Magna Charta ancestors from whom they inherited their love of freedom. Almost as thrilling to me as more dignified patriotic songs is that ridiculous line in Yankee Doodle, 'I guess as how the British King can't whip our Continentals.' England could not keep us always in the status of minor children. When we ~~became~~ of age we denied her right to exact implicit obedience from us; we did not renounce the love that grown children give to a parent.

We American Nordics are the possessors of the greatest land on earth because of our Anglo-Saxon inheritance, that pioneer spirit, the determination to secure for ourselves and our posterity the best in life. We have prevailed on this continent because of our unflinching English will to do and to have.

We Americans who have kept our English blood pure have more tangible evidence than even our verified records to prove our close relationship to our cousins on the other side of the Atlantic. It is plainly shown in many of our racial characteristics. One of the closest resemblances is in our lack of demonstrativeness in displaying deep-lying emotions. We often appear mute, stoical, while within are surging feelings that would make us burst into tears if we tried to utter them. Sometimes we may express them on paper.

In 1914 had I been a single man I should have enlisted with the Canadians ; had I been a single woman I should have gone in whatever capacity England would have taken me. Being a married woman with two children I could only pray for British victories. In 1917 I rejoiced that at last we were fighting side by side with the mother country. I was not interested very much in saving the world for democracy ; I was not interested particularly in the welfare of the Allies (not being international-minded) ; I was interested only in helping England, England, England.

I am only one, just one representative American citizen of English descent who feel as a part of our being this love for the little British Isle. It is our background. There are millions of us. We speak out from the pages of books, magazines, and even newspapers. For instance, there is Fanny Heaslip Lea saying through one of her characters :

‘ I was born loving England.’ (So was I, Fanny.)

Nancy Byrd Turner utters in exultant verse :

*‘ London, London,
They counted me a fool—
I could draw your skyline
Before I went to school.*

*Sing, you rhymes, and ring, you chimes,
And swing, you bells of Bow !
When I go up to London
All the world shall know !*

One of my little girls upon meeting an English woman for the first time enquired with breathless eagerness :

‘ Have you ever seen the Queen ? Have you ever been in Sherwood Forest ? ’

In a story of the War between the States pity is expressed at the thought of strife between soldiers who ‘ had behind them the same background of a far island home, and then of sailing ships, and then of a new land.’

Dorothie Bobbe says for Abigail Adams visiting England for the first time :

‘ One race after all ! One object, it was to be hoped, in the future.’

And still London did not call us. London calling aliens, who pay only a nominal and, in many cases, unwilling allegiance to the Empire, left us out. We who are bound to England by the closest ties of blood and spirit, bonds stronger than political ones could ever be, we of the same language, ideals, ancestry, we were not called.

Will you call us next time, London ? We are here !
Louisiana.

II—DURING AND AFTER.

BY EDITH STURGIS.

I.

‘ Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks.’—MILTON.

May 12, 1937 : Small wonder our hearts beat faster this Coronation morning. Soon we shall hear : ‘ This is Lon-

don calling !' Absorbing words, liberating flood-tides of thought across the four thousand miles between us.

While we wait, it is a time of mixed emotions. Vital allegiance to our own dear land is ever interwoven inextricably with the bright bonds of British ancestry. Even our home and manner of living still bear the indelible stamp of that heritage. And yet there is the realisation we are 'outsiders,' the feeling we are about to overhear something not meant for us. We have no part in this intimate assemblage of Empire.

In these moments, one thinks of the myriad American homes, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, astir with the same neighbourly interest. Even as this is written, one can look out upon the city and see the lights flick on in homes far and near, whose dwellers—of all races and climes—arise to attend a Crowning.

It is not yet four in the morning here in Chicago (really not three by sun-time, and sunrise still to come), and we have been stirring nearly an hour. It is still too soon for us to know what sort of day it is in London. That is important to us because, for months, there has been a prayer in our hearts for 'King's Weather' on his Hallowing Day ; for a sudden, sanctifying shaft of sunlight at the instant of crowning ; jewels securely set in the diadem—good omens, all !

It has been interesting to note in the American press the steadily increasing space devoted, not only to the current preparations, but to the historical data of past Coronations as well. Several newspapers have pointed out the symbolism of the ceremonies. They have attempted to explain in what manner these rites transform a ruler into a being set apart from secular and political influences.

One brief sentence, tucked away in the midst of a London

despatch some ten days ago, epitomises the respect and affection in which the Royal Family is held ; what they mean as an expression of national dignity and honour. The article concerned the first early morning rehearsal along the procession route where, it was estimated, some 200,000 gathered to watch the famous gilded coach roll by. Eleven simple words—explaining the coherence of an empire :

‘ When the coach passed the crowds cheered, although it was empty. ’

What further proof need there be of the love and high esteem of a great people for a great institution ? A good thing to remember in these days of will-o’-the-wisp loyalties.

In a trans-Atlantic broadcast, the eminent British author, Mr. Laurence Housman, spoke humorously of our seemingly insatiable interest in the Coronation, attributing this to an atavistic delight in ritual. Certainly, evidence is ample that there must be some unconsumed remnant of old loyalties still simmering within our American melting-pot. But it is doubtful if we ever develop anything as binding as ritual for our own. As a nation, we are too restless. Our distances are too great. And our sprightly desire to do the newest things, to build the biggest things (then proceed to uproot them promptly for ‘ bigger ’), is too much a part of our national disposition. Yet, although we love ritual without understanding it or wanting it for our own, how we do enjoy clambering over the neighbouring hedgerow to see what is going on !

Six final Coronation sailings, all clearing port the same day, carried the last contingent of over 7,000 London-bound Americans. But, to us, high up on the fourteenth floor of a twentieth-century apartment building in the pulsing resonance of a mid-western city—the cleavage, between our

modern, mechanised surroundings and the age-misted feudal rites we are about to hear, is far more evident than to those who have gone to the heart of the Empire. And yet in a moment, by the miracle that is radio, a thousand years will be abridged within an abbey.

As the hour approaches much comes to mind. So many things we wonder about. Does Her Majesty speak with a Scot's 'burr'? Does His Majesty resemble his revered father as closely as his photographs indicate? How is it humanly possible for Her Majesty, Mary, the Queen-Mother, to maintain at all times her imperturbable stateliness and ineffable charm? What will be the thoughts of those two heart-warming little princesses on this day of ancient sacraments? And so on, our thoughts range the gamut of interest.

In our eagerness to be a vicarious part of the attendant multitude, no detail of preparation has been overlooked. Radios have been tested to make certain the aerials are functioning correctly. Tubes have been overhauled so they are now at 'concert pitch.' And last, but by no means least, the family alarm-clock has been well oiled and put through its paces so there would be no risk of its neglecting to waken us. A few moments ago, a smiling Filipino houseboy appeared with welcome breakfast trays. Thus, we have had awakening cups of hot, fragrant coffee (yes, 317 years in another land does something to one's taste for tea); bowls of typically crisp American cereal; toast and plenty of butter.

What is this we hear? Organ music, British music—from the New York studios. There is delay and still more delay, while our impatience mounts. This waiting is difficult and there's nearly an hour of it. While we wait, the time is well spent. Asking for guidance in finding the

answer to our hearts' prayer for an especial blessing on the hallowing of Their Majesties, the Bible opens and we read :

'Thine eyes shall see the king in beauty ; they shall behold the land that is very far off.

'He shall dwell on high ; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks ; bread shall be given him ; his waters shall be sure.

'And the work of righteousness shall be peace : and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.'

What better answer could there be ? What brighter promise ?

II.

VIVAT REX GEORGIUS ! VIVAT ! VIVAT !

3.45 a.m. : 'This is London'—in a quiet, restrained voice, as clearly heard as though we were at the observer's side. The Palace Quadrangle is bumping with assembling troops beneath an overhanging tide of cheers. We feel the suppressed effervescence of the crowd waiting outside the gates. The band of the Royal Scots Greys strikes up—of all things—a Sousa march ! It is strangely thrilling in such surroundings. We hear that an inscription on one of the Palace garden gates is : 'The gods delight in such a situation.'

A quick trip to the Abbey annex. Memory and imagination combine as we visualise the matchless mosaic of colour there. The restless anticipation of the crowds in Parliament Square stiffens with each fresh arrival of notables.

Back to the Palace in time to feel an up-surge of expectancy as the amazing old coach, itself, with the famous Windsor greys, postillions and walking-men, rolls up before the doors. A fanfare—liquid notes of triumph ! The Household Cavalry band fills the air with Sousa's 'Stars and Stripes

For Ever.' It is difficult to express the feeling we have, hearing that grand march on such an occasion. With a monumental roar from their rapturous subjects, the King and Queen leave for their crowning.

Again to the Abbey as Queen Mary—God bless her—is arriving. Colour, emotion, waves of devotion, pour over the air. For Queen Mary symbolises all of Britain's proud traditions. Another riptide of cheers for the little princesses, looking as though they had just stepped out of a beloved fairy tale.

The pivotal procession is passing the Cenotaph of blessed memory. But back we go to the Abbey, where Yeomen of the Guard, halberds in hand, the superb Indian cavalry and glittering Indian aides-de-camp assemble. One finds it necessary to record impressions in the sharp tempo of suspense. Events are crowding fast. The bells of St. Margaret's peal forth—a carillon of sheer ecstasy. Yes! Their Majesties have come—a finger of sunlight resting on their coach at the moment of arrival. We hear the Queen is very pale and the King is noticeably under a strain. At last our observer breaks the tenseness with: 'It is like a pack of cards come to life!' As the way is cleared for Their Majesties, he tells us that the carpet leading into the Abbey is like a deep blue stream between two scarlet banks.

The first, faint sounds of the organ. Another fanfare soaring into the Abbey's heights. The glorious song of the choir—transcendently beautiful. Then the Westminster schoolboys' time-honoured Vivats for the Queen. Who but a Psalmist could encompass the solemnity of all this!

Silver-throated fanfares. Vivats for the King. An anthem rising like a mist of incense. May the windows of heaven be flung wide to-day that all the hosts of Britain's glorious past may look out upon this consecrating!

Their Majesties have knelt in prayer—please God, fulfil it. The Recognition—and, standing alone as always he must—the King shows himself to his people. East.—South—West—North, an avalanche of sound. As he turns to the West, we echo : ‘ God save King George ! ’

The Oath—and the King speaks : ‘ I am willing ’—so resolute is his voice. What deep over-tones of emotion. He continues : ‘ I solemnly promise so to do.’ Increasing depths of feeling darken his voice as the service unfolds. It has the resonance of a church bell. What a fair sight this slender, shy young king must be as he is robed and girded.

All the civilised world leans forward. The quintessence of solemnity is in the clear voice of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Our reserve of inherited British reticence is spent. The moment of crowning is here. A golden stream of sunlight comes to bless him ! Now, the Enthronement and Homage amid a swelling diapason of organ and trumpets thundering out upon the world.

The crowning of the Queen takes on a gentler note. There are moments of silence and recollection ; then a hymn, sanctified by fifteen hundred years of worship. An anthem, superb in its climactic blend of voices, trumpets, singing violins and mighty organ. Another moment of respite—and the *Te Deum* breaks forth, surpassing description. There is majesty, triumph, holy visions within its splendour.

With a final roll of drums, fanfares and swirls of colour—all caught up in this pæan of exultation—the naked blade of the Sword of State precedes the departure of Their Majesties ‘ along a flaming river of jewels,’ as our quick-thinking observer tells it.

Amid the clamour of the bells, Their Majesties start out upon their overwhelming journey to the Palace. Tumult

For Ever.' It is difficult to express the feeling we have, hearing that grand march on such an occasion. With a monumental roar from their rapturous subjects, the King and Queen leave for their crowning.

Again to the Abbey as Queen Mary—God bless her—is arriving. Colour, emotion, waves of devotion, pour over the air. For Queen Mary symbolises all of Britain's proud traditions. Another riptide of cheers for the little princesses, looking as though they had just stepped out of a beloved fairy tale.

The pivotal procession is passing the Cenotaph of blessed memory. But back we go to the Abbey, where Yeomen of the Guard, halberds in hand, the superb Indian cavalry and glittering Indian aides-de-camp assemble. One finds it necessary to record impressions in the sharp tempo of suspense. Events are crowding fast. The bells of St. Margaret's peal forth—a carillon of sheer ecstasy. Yes ! Their Majesties have come—a finger of sunlight resting on their coach at the moment of arrival. We hear the Queen is very pale and the King is noticeably under a strain. At last our observer breaks the tenseness with : ' It is like a pack of cards come to life ! ' As the way is cleared for Their Majesties, he tells us that the carpet leading into the Abbey is like a deep blue stream between two scarlet banks.

The first, faint sounds of the organ. Another fanfare soaring into the Abbey's heights. The glorious song of the choir—transcendentally beautiful. Then the Westminster schoolboys' time-honoured Vivats for the Queen. Who but a Psalmist could encompass the solemnity of all this !

Silver-throated fanfares. Vivats for the King. An anthem rising like a mist of incense. May the windows of heaven be flung wide to-day that all the hosts of Britain's glorious past may look out upon this consecrating !

Their Majesties have knelt in prayer—please God, fulfil it. The Recognition—and, standing alone as always he must—the King shows himself to his people. East—South—West—North, an avalanche of sound. As he turns to the West, we echo : ‘ God save King George ! ’

The Oath—and the King speaks : ‘ I am willing ’—so resolute is his voice. What deep over-tones of emotion. He continues : ‘ I solemnly promise so to do.’ Increasing depths of feeling darken his voice as the service unfolds. It has the resonance of a church bell. What a fair sight this slender, shy young king must be as he is robed and girded.

All the civilised world leans forward. The quintessence of solemnity is in the clear voice of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Our reserve of inherited British reticence is spent. The moment of crowning is here. A golden stream of sunlight comes to bless him ! Now, the Enthronement and Homage amid a swelling diapason of organ and trumpets thundering out upon the world.

The crowning of the Queen takes on a gentler note. There are moments of silence and recollection ; then a hymn, sanctified by fifteen hundred years of worship. An anthem, superb in its climactic blend of voices, trumpets, singing violins and mighty organ. Another moment of respite—and the Te Deum breaks forth, surpassing description. There is majesty, triumph, holy visions within its splendour.

With a final roll of drums, fanfares and swirls of colour—all caught up in this pæan of exultation—the naked blade of the Sword of State precedes the departure of Their Majesties ‘ along a flaming river of jewels,’ as our quick-thinking observer tells it.

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rolls wave on wave, mounting with each mile. Pulse-raising cheers rise in unbelievable crescendo. What is that? We hear the pipes! Highland regiments are a brave sight, but this skirl of the pipes disquiets the heart with longings for 'Misty islands of the Highlands, that's where this heart of mine for ever longs to be.'

One hears the tramp of peace-keeping feet, the treble shrill of children's cheers and the staccato of the drums. But over all, the rising cataract of cheers until Their Majesties are safe at home at last.

III.

'Britain—I see her in her old age—but young, and still daring to believe in her power of endurance—with strength still equal to the time.'—EMERSON.

It has been an invigorating privilege to attend this drama of an imperishable empire. We spend much time thinking of the vivid panorama just unfolded, only to find the clock has sped to the moment when we are to hear the King's message to his people. Again we are impressed with the clarity and warmth of his voice. It is a fact that a microphone brings out the best (and, sometimes, the worst!) in one's voice. In the face of the realisation that the world was his audience, the King proved his almost superhuman self-control, where others might well have faltered. To us, one of the most human portions of the entire broadcast was the informal interim immediately preceding his address. For at least a full minute before anyone was aware of it, it was obvious the microphone was open. The subdued laughs, family whisperings (indistinguishable, alas!), and a hasty clearing of the King's throat came through with entertaining clarity.

As the day wears on, certain phases of the kaleidoscopic,

unequalled ceremonials rise to the surface from the welter of events. When one reluctantly sets aside the pageantry and only considers the significance of the whole-souled acclaim accorded Their Majesties, one immediately senses the touching tribute to the memory of the late King George and his gracious Consort. It is as though the mantle of deep affection with which they were surrounded by their people had been tendered anew to worthy successors.

Evening comes, and we have a modest celebration of our own which, of course, appropriately includes a roast of beef with Yorkshire pudding; and we do not forget to drink to the health of the King—in California wine.

There still remains the inclination to talk over many things, events of to-day and other days. We like to think of the gaiety in London to-night. One can fairly hear the throb of regimental marches, the whisk of dancing feet, wistful waltzes of another era. We can never forget the singing of the National Anthem at the Abbey—the full-throated fervour, the promise in that singing! All the greatness of Britain, all the continuity of her strength was centred in that exhilarating moment.

Is there dismay in this strange world of ours? Yes. Discontent? Yes. But, above and beyond it all, we have heard London calling again to her outermost posts of empire, uplifting her indomitable spirit once more within the curving symmetry of Time.

GOD SAVE THE KING !

Chicago.

[At the author's request, the remuneration for this article is being sent to Dr. Barnardo's Homes, 'as a Coronation remembrance from an interested and appreciative American.']

W. B. YEATS.

AN APPRECIATION.

BY L. A. G. STRONG.

I.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS has been all his life a poet. No one in the field of modern letters has so consistently worn the poet's mantle, or known so unerringly how to make experience serve his art. The range of that art, both intellectual and emotional, is wide : yet it is a distillation. The poet has learned to jettison all that might harm it, and to divert such of his abilities as did not nourish it. From this knowledge, and by this austerity, he has been able to touch with his poetry rare and common objects, the solitudes of vision and the things men squabble over, and to kindle from all a flame of dignity and passion.

The full art has fed on a full life. Wit, student of magic, shrewd in affairs, a man of inquisitive and agile mind, he has known both how to manage his wits and to allow for his genius. Sociable and a talker, he has preserved his poetic personality from the attrition of casual contacts. He has one of the most formidable minds in Europe ; and no country but Ireland could have produced him.

II.

Because of his range, and the difficulty of following this formidable mind, students must lean heavily upon Yeats's *Autobiographies*. These tell a great deal about the mind, but they are incomplete on the emotional side. ' . . . Being

in love, and in no way lucky in that love . . . : for some things we must go, not to the life, but to the poetry. We are unlikely to learn a great deal more about the mind than he tells us, but from that long tale of acceptances and rejections something may be learned, and the effort at appraisal rise above impertinence. For, despite the splendour of the mantle, the wearer is what Lady Gregory's pauper would call a conversible man. He has his weaknesses and his follies, which he does not try to hide, and our admiration grows as we see how he has kept them from weakening his art.

'I am persuaded that at twenty our intellects contain all the truths we shall ever find.' The all-important early years were stamped with impressions of Sligo and London. Sligo gave the best, for London has never won Yeats's affections, and he and his sister lamented fiercely by the drinking fountain at Holland Park their exile from the home of their grandparents, longing for a sod of Sligo turf to hold in their hands.

The boy kept newts in jars, rode a pony, though not too well, and liked the ordinary outdoor country things. But he was waiting to grow up. 'I remember little of childhood but its pain.' 'I have grown happier with every year of life as though gradually conquering something in myself.' His relations and the people he met in Sligo all had character, and were capable of gestures which could nourish a romantic mind. Though his boyhood and youth were to be spent among artists, there was between London and Sligo a difference paralleled later by the difference between the shapeless sodden faces of certain women seen in London and those gaunter women, crazed with drink, who carried their heads high and strode through the Dublin streets, talking to themselves in loud harsh voices. The

cast of his mind was already determined, and the Middletons and the Pollexfens and the country people were stocking it with unforgettable images.

School was difficult for the boy who found it hard to attend to anything less interesting than his thoughts. What he lost there was made up, and more, by his father. J. B. Yeats the painter was a man of vigorous mind, with all his son's love of intensity. He would at breakfast 'read passages from the poets, and always from the play or poem at its most passionate moment' to a son who was later to confess: 'I only seem to remember things dramatic in themselves or that are somehow associated with unforgettable places.' What a stimulus the father's talk must have been can be gauged from the collections of his letters put out some years ago by the Cuala Press, every one alive with the strength of an authoritative mind. There is much of the father in the son, but the son has strengthened his inheritance: the range of his mind is wider, its muscles more flexible.

From London and the conversation of painters the boy went back frequently to Sligo. Already the struggles were beginning that were to shape his manhood, the search for belief, the effort towards self-possession, the enquiry into the nature of reality. 'I did not believe with my intellect that you could be carried away body and soul, but I believed with my emotions, and the belief of the country people made that easy.' The conflict between emotion and intellect persists, and what is meant by belief is not solved even in his own later criticisms on *A Vision*. The effort towards self-possession, of which more presently, has yielded not only a manner but a philosophy: and Edmund Wilson, most penetrating of modern critics, says 'Yeats's sense of reality to-day is inferior to that of no man alive.'

But before going into these questions it is best to finish outlining the life. The young man studied drawing and painting, listened to Dowden—to whom, when the older man disclaimed Irish blood, he suggested that Dowden was a diminutive of O'Dowda—heard Florence Farr speak verse, and met Maud Gonne. He came under the influence of Henley, his first master. 'I . . . began under him my education.' 'I disagreed with him about everything, but I admired him beyond words.' The reasons for Henley's ascendancy are hard to give, but 'he was quite plainly not upon the side of our parents.' Wilde opened up new possibilities for the talker, and William Morris left the deepest impress of all, so deep that, if Yeats could choose a life to live, it would be that of this violent irascible man who—how deep the influence goes!—wrote romances in which the characters meet situations of the utmost embarrassment with an inviolable tact and courtesy. Can any life show more strikingly than Yeats's how a personality attracts to itself the ideas, the symbols, the experiences it needs and is to need?

Yeats was now upon the full tide of idealism; and he had met Maud Gonne. He mortified the flesh, as in earlier years he had slept in a cave and fed upon buns and tea. Believing that to write in the first person was egotistical, he wrote poems in which the personal emotion (there was plenty of it) 'was woven into a general pattern of myth and symbol.' He was tireless in the service of Ireland, lecturing up and down the country, spending his personality freely, flinging into the movement all his powers. The activity taught him a great deal about his countrymen and about himself. The Irishman is difficult to work for. He has a habit of denying patriotism to all who do not think as he does. The bitterness of this discovery, reinforced

later on, was to go into many of the poems in *Responsibilities* and elsewhere : but the poet had learned something more important than Paudeen's spite. He had learned the need for a public as distinct from a private personality. 'I had sat talking in public bars, had talked late into the night at many men's houses, showing all my convictions to men that were but ready for one, and used conversation to explore and discover among men who looked for authority.'

The lesson came pat, for it confirmed one of the dominant myths or images of the poet's life. At an early stage of their acquaintance, he had been much excited by a painting of A. E., in which a man standing upon a crag gazed at his shadow flung upon the drifting clouds. The image of the anti-self had been born in Yeats's mind, an image which was to find constant expression in his poetry and in his life. Everything in those early years converged to drive the lesson home. 'In my youth,' he was to say, years afterwards, when rallied for wearing a top-hat at a Ballsbridge function, 'I read in that book which I still think the wisest of all books, *Wilhelm Meister* by Goethe, "The poor are ; but the rich are enabled also to seem." I was then shy and awkward, and I set myself to acquire this technique of seeming, forcing myself to attend functions of every kind until I had it.' The technique of seeming, the parrot screaming at its image in the enamelled sea, the birds flying above their shadows in the evening splendour, the manner that, when people came into the room, changed from intimacy to a performance : all are expressions of that dominant myth, and, which is their importance for us, have preserved from attrition the greatest poetic personality of our time.

The meeting with A. E. was important for many reasons. Yeats had always a tendency to visions, and his friend's

facility compelled him to scrutinise the whole question. He ceased to accept visions at their face value when the lower half of John Bull presented itself vividly before him : he ' could not envisage John Bull as an inhabitant of Eternity.' He decided that such visions were the language rather than the message. They needed interpretation. They were symbols. Once again it is noteworthy how a mind attracts to itself the knowledge necessary to its development. When Yeats fell under the influence of the French symbolists, he was not only ready, but able to help himself to just as much of their practice as he needed. He had always this mark of the great artist, that he could surrender to an influence, and emerge from it more strongly himself than ever. Shelley, Ferguson, Douglas Hyde, the French symbolists, Lady Gregory, Synge, Ezra Pound—he found in them all something that belonged to him and helped him to fulfilment.

So, with his natural scepticism sharpened—he has from childhood been balanced between scepticism and belief—he came gladly but with caution to his doctrine of symbols. Symbols have meant more to him than to any poet of his age except A. E. They have a fundamental, universal meaning. By their aid the human mind and memory, with its shifting borders, can get in touch with the mind and memory of Nature. He practised with his uncle, concentrating upon a cabalistic symbol and evoking a scene expressive of its significance in his uncle's mind. Concentrating upon the fire symbol, he set a fellow-diner talking of a house on fire. These correspondences, if proved, would add substantially to the magic of his verse. The thought may have been unspoken, but he was by now incapable of doing or thinking anything from which his verse would not ultimately be the gainer. And so he goes

on, developing all sides of his personality, curious, eager, impassioned : pulling himself together for the study of Blake, and emerging with all his convictions deepened. 'I had learned from Blake to hate all abstraction : ' seeking still for the image cast on the clouds—'I constantly hoped for some gain in self-possession, in rapidity of decision, in capacity for disguise.'

Few poets escape their own mannerisms. Wordsworth did not, Tennyson did not, Swinburne did not. Yeats in his middle years made a complete change and became a better poet. He had kept intellect out of his early verse, together with 'impurities' such as 'curiosities about politics, science, history, and religion.' The fairyland with which it was concerned was the equivalent of the sod of Sligo turf he and his sister had longed to hold in London. It was an escape, a symbol of the imagination. There was a sharp division between the real world and that to which the fairy child in *The Land of Heart's Desire* beckoned away the newly married bride. The real world was 'too full of weeping' to be understood. It was a dangerous doctrine, and Yeats saw the danger. He remembered the advice he had given Synge ; and the conviction Synge put into his laconic prefaces came at the right time for Synge's preceptor. He put off the embroidered cloak, not only because others had worn it in the world's eye, but for his own sake.

*To write for my own race
And for the reality . . .*

It was his new resolve, and to achieve it he went back to Ben Bulbin and the clear focused images of his boyhood.

*Maybe a twelvemonth since
Suddenly I began
In scorn of this audience
Imagining a man,*

*And his sun-freckled face
 And grey Connemara cloth,
 Climbing up to a place
 Where stone is dark under froth,
 And the down turn of his wrist
 When the flies drop in the stream :
 A man who does not exist,
 A man who is but a dream ;
 And cried ' Before I am old
 I shall have written him one
 Poem maybe as cold
 And passionate as the dawn.'*

The new poetry, bare, 'withered into truth,' with its stern architecture of winter boughs, proved capable of including without loss of dignity a wider range of subject than any contemporary poet had dared to tackle. The change was not only a change of subject, but of rhythm and syntax. The old luxuriant rhythms were gone.

*All the heavy days are over,
 Leave the body's coloured pride
 Underneath the grass and clover
 With the feet laid side by side*

gave place to

Suddenly I saw the cold and rook-delighting heaven . . .

It was an astonishing development, and it lifted Yeats at once to the stature of a major poet. He has gone since from strength to strength, and his place is secure.

III.

The conflict between contemplation and action has taken many forms in Yeats's life as well as in his philosophy. In practice it has most often been the quarrel in him between the partisan and the philosopher. He is exceedingly effec-

tive in the world of affairs, and proud of his cunning. His sense of reality, the shrewdness which he possesses in high degree, shows him times out of number how to manage a man or a situation, and the temptation to turn aside has often been irresistible. A feeling for mischief aids it. 'I must smooth him down,' he said softly, when a lifelong friend had gone off in a huff. 'I must smooth him down.' His eyes gleamed behind their glasses, his lips moved silently : and the means adopted, a quite unnecessary display of virtuosity, were brilliantly successful. It is this cunning, the knowledge that, if need be, he could beat the knave at his own game, which the philosopher in him has been obliged to disapprove of and to disallow. Yeats's difficulty, it cannot be too often stated, has been to select from his many abilities those which belonged to him as a poet, and to give the others harmless employment elsewhere. At their best, they established the Abbey Theatre : at their most mischievous, they flourished before a bewildered Censorship official, as an argument against banning Mr. Shaw's *Adventures of the Black Girl*, photographs of sculptures from the Sistine chapel. But there are no flourishes, no mere practical effectiveness, no theatrical gestures in his poetry. 'No mind can engender till divided into two.' The duality has been fruitful.

IV.

Another conflict, that between scepticism and belief, cuts deeper. Yeats has been from the start an intensely religious man, longing always to return to the simple faith of childhood. The effort has been continuous.

. . . 'Deprived by Huxley and Tyndall, whom I detested, of the simple-minded religion of my childhood, I had made

a new religion, almost an infallible church of poetic tradition, of a fardel of stories, and of personages, and of emotions, inseparable from their first expression, passed on from generation to generation by poets and painters with some help from philosophers and theologians.'

Later, he tried long and persistently to found a philosophy and a ritual for the imaginary mystical order that was to live in a castle which had taken his fancy. The urge that led him to the Cabala, that was to make him study and reject Plotinus and Von Hugel, has given him little peace from boyhood to age. Combining with his need of a philosophy, it is responsible for his studies in magic and his elaborate attempts to formulate the results into a system. Whatever view we take of *A Vision*, it is not hard to account for. We have an almost embarrassing number of explanations. First of all, however, let us take the author's account of how it came to be written. It is based upon automatic writings by Mrs. Yeats, begun very soon after their marriage in 1917. At first he was so excited that he 'offered to spend what remained of life explaining and piecing together those scattered sentences,' but received the significant warning that the messages had come to give him 'metaphors for poetry.' The messages proceeded to elaborate the distinction between 'the perfection that is from a man's combat with himself and that which is from a combat with circumstances,' which Yeats himself had made in what is perhaps his profoundest prose work, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*. They were accompanied by a number of physical manifestations, and at times interfered with by interpolations of obvious nonsense. When the study of certain philosophers suggested a revision, further messages came, to let the philosophers alone.

The first thought that occurs here can be put in the words

Yeats himself used of Macgregor Mathers :—‘He . . . thought that when he had proved that an image could act independently of his mind, he had proved also that neither it, nor what it had spoken, had originated there.’ The messages were based upon a philosophical distinction of Yeats’s own. The supposed sender, when interference was suspected, confessed it, adding—as Yeats puts it—‘Had I not divined frustration he would have said nothing.’ We can hardly resist asking whether Yeats himself saw that all this might be the dramatisation of something in his own mind ; that it might be his own mind which his wife’s subconsciousness was reading ? The creative artist often seems to take down his work from dictation, or to report what he sees and hears, as if he were watching something independent of himself. May not something of the kind have happened here ? Has Yeats, in his search for faith, believed what he wanted to believe ?

The question is complicated by his attitude towards the finished work. Does he believe it all ? He answers by another question, ‘Does the word belief, used as they [his questioners] will use it, belong to our age, can I think of the world as there and I here judging it ?’ And he goes on to suggest that the whole may be after all a background for his thought, a set of symbols ; ‘metaphors for poetry.’

This looks like an attempt to have it both ways, to shuffle out of responsibility : but it is not. Holding the view of the material world which he holds, he could make no other answer. Yeats believes—and this is no place to go into the evidence for his belief—that images created by the mind can function independently of the creator mind and assume, if only temporarily, material form. ‘The subjective can walk about the room’ and leave footprints which will remain visible after it has disappeared. Symbol, or thought,

will often call into existence a manifestation associated with it, varying in objectivity with the degree of mediumship available. Such phenomena, if honestly faced, can lead to only one conclusion. The tangible world is a drama, a representation, in terms prescribed by the level and quality of human perceptions, of an underlying reality. Everything in nature is a symbol, in the sense that it is an interpretation put by our senses upon a reality we cannot otherwise know. Belief therefore ceases to be a literal acceptance of the evidence of the senses, or a criticism of experience for apparent failure to conform to that evidence. It becomes an intuition of harmony within a system.

The question whether Yeats believes all that is in *A Vision*, then, resolves itself into the question whether it continues to satisfy him within its own terms. We shall have an answer when his projected revision of it appears : but all we need really ask ourselves is whether it helps his mind to function and make discoveries along the lines of its own peculiar excellence. If *A Vision* clarifies and systematises his thought, it needs no exterior justification. And, when we seek an *interior* justification, when we come to ask why he wrote it, we have, as I said, an embarrassing number of answers. Was it an elaboration of those longed-for beliefs of the countryside, a chart of the fairy world, a system of philosophy for the imagined inhabitants of that castle ? Was it a tribute to conscience, an attempt to replace the faith destroyed by Huxley and Tyndall ? Was it a code of symbols ? Was it an artist's attempt to systematise a background of thought and image which, if not fully understood, might make his poetry vague and chaotic ? Was it a full, wise, open-eyed surrender to inspiration, which could, he knew, take many forms ? Was he 'getting off his chest' matter which might be bad for his verse ?

There is no lack of explanations, and the truth may be a blend of them all.

V.

Yeats is a fine example of the unscientific critic, by which is meant the critic who, instead of detaching himself impartially, illumines by surrender to his own prepossessions. No man living has a better eye for what is germane to or directly repugnant from his own thought. Where he is sympathetic, Yeats's criticism is unsurpassed. He has flashes of insight which put him among the masters. But, once off his own lines, he is increasingly uncertain, rejecting whole masses of work that do not interest him, forcing play or poem or novel to his own angle, and exaggerating much for the sake of a little which seems to chime with his own mind. This does not matter. He is not a professional critic; we do not go to him for unbiased judgment, but for the sake of what he can tell us when he is biased. Yeats's thought responding to the stimulus of great work is as revealing as a flash of lightning, and many of the critical *dicta* with which his writings are strewn are of the first order.

VI.

The writings which make Yeats's direct contribution to the theatre are as a whole the least satisfactory part of his work. His indirect contribution, the work of Synge and the establishment of the Abbey Theatre, would be enough to keep his name green in theatrical history. His plays have suffered from a vagueness and dimness of characterisation. Admittedly what he was trying to do was some-

thing alien from the ordinary theatre, where the clash is between character and circumstance. He was bent upon creating a poetic drama, in which the character became a mask, a symbol for the expression of emotion and passionate intensity, a non-realistic art the speech of which was poetry. But the aim was not always clearly pursued, the poet's superb sense of character in ordinary life broke in, and, except in some of the later poetic plays, there is an unintended compromise which enables the plays to be compared with other plays, to their dramatic disadvantage. Apart from this compromise, the plays suffer from a positive quality of Yeats's thought. The man to whom symbol and what it represents are almost in the nature of cause and effect, the man, that is to say, for whom the symbol is constant and will always call up its appropriate picture and emotion, will not be at sufficient pains to embody his symbolic characters before an audience. The character will already be what he is to represent, before he steps upon the stage. He will be a mask, his face already fixed in the appropriate grimace of mirth or grief. Shakespeare's characters are revealed, not presented. The very quality which is a strength to Yeats's poetry has weakened his drama. His plays as a rule read better than they play. There are notable exceptions ; and a recent prose play, *The Words upon the Window Pane*, is terrifyingly effective either upon the stage or in the study. 'When we were reading the play,' said an Abbey actor, 'we said again and again "This will never do on the stage." But when we came to play it, we found he was right every time.' The latest plays, with their freedom from the old compromise, have a power all their own : yet it is hard to resist the conclusion, that Yeats has been least happy as a dramatist.

VII.

His prose is magnificent. Supple in his youth, mannered and stately in his middle period, it has now all its old suppleness and an epigrammatic force adequate for every purpose. No period, no sentence even, could be the work of any other hand, yet it is all natural, and we do not feel, as sometimes in the middle period, that it is the result of labour and that the order and punctuation are arbitrary and deliberate. There is nothing against manner and state in writing, but the prose of the later *Autobiographies* bears the same relation to such writings as his fireside talk does to the performance when intimacy has become impossible.

His quality has been long recognised by poets of all schools. 'He can't play cricket,' said Bridges years ago to another poet in his garden at Boar's Hill, 'but he is a better poet than you or I.' Yeats's achievement has been to extend the whole range of poetry in his time, to pass from one excellence to another, and to prove (as some of the newest poets have hitherto failed to prove) that there is nothing in contemporary life which a sufficiently disciplined poetry cannot include and transmute. It is easy enough to put this and that object into a verse. The task is to give it poetic significance. Yeats has been able to make poetry out of the most perilous and recalcitrant material, because of the strength of the personality through which it has passed, and because man and technique are one. His passionate interest, his fierce curiosity, his sceptical scrutinising mind have always, since the early days when he deliberately limited his attack, been exercised in his work. There has been no split between vocabulary and imagination—a split that has silenced several poets of our time, or driven them to prose. The mischievous elements, the partisanship, the

cunning, all that might damage the poetry, have been side-tracked into other activities. Every influence has been made to yield its best and make the poet more himself: he has surrendered without loss of identity even to Swift. In epigrammatic power, as well as in music, his poetry will always be a landmark in literary history; and poets in time to come will draw inspiration from one who, tempted by manifold abilities, never turned aside, but made a passionate lifetime serve his art.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

*When I am old I will hark back and say,
'I heard the nightingale on such a day!'
The wind was pulsing in the dark trees then,
Now throbbing softly, and again
Deep in the trough of stillness for awhile;
And I was leaning on the stile
Watching the thin moon and the evening star;
You know how quiet all the creatures are
At such a time,
And how, if it is fine,
The moon throws shadows, and you lean
And, half-forgetful of the midnight, dream,
So was it then:
Silence stole after when
The wind's pulse weakened,
Clouds trailed across, the half-dusk deepened;
I waited, and the name
Leapt to my lips, as the sweet voice came,
Threading the stillness, 'The nightingale!' I cried,
A hush followed, and the trees sighed
At the pausing—'Ah, I'll say,
'I heard the nightingale on such a day.'*

F. C. PRICE.

DARK HORSES.

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

[At Merton Magna, in East Devon, live Richard Challice, wheelwright, Ivy, his wife, Leonard, Samson, and Linda, his children, and Verity, his old mother. Simon Pye, friendly, retired neighbour, engages Richard to look after his orchard and Linda as maidservant: he makes friends with the Challices and gives Richard his dream, a piece of land on which is a disused lime-kiln. Simon's son, Gerald, visits his father and sets his snares for Linda.]

IX.

RETURN.

ON the evening after Gerald's departure, Mr. Pye lighted his pipe and strolled in peace beside the river. He was conscious of extreme relief at being left alone, and only one element of distraction attended on this comfortable emotion. His son had declared that it might be quite possible they would meet again very shortly, but when asked the reason, replied that it was too soon to say. Now Simon dismissed this memory, breathed the coolness of the evening air, marked the play of after-glow upon the face of the waters and felt at rest. 'The dædal hand of Nature' was increasingly felt by him as he grew old and he would not seldom turn from science and philosophy to walk, like a child, among things now grown not only familiar but precious to his brooding bent of mind.

In the amiable spirit he had now attained, Mr. Pye tried to see the attractive side of Gerald and remembered his assiduous attention, unfailing good humour and courtesy; but these were slight things easily practised, and even so, they never appeared to Simon as any innate manifestation of the real man. Too well he recollected events of the past and, though

no shrewd student of human nature, there ever returned a subconscious repulsion and distrust when he and Gerald were long together. To-night he refused his mind opportunity to brood on questions of character and merely wondered what had led Gerald to promise a speedy return. Nothing pointed to such a need and the truth never dawned for Simon until he heard it, for of all things he judged that marriage was the last enterprise to occupy his son. But when he did hear what Gerald came to tell him a week later, every instinct in the elder inclined to doubt whether the young man spoke truth and, in common with others, he erred and took mistaken means to verify it.

Had Richard Challice and his father raised no opposition to the marriage, Gerald must have wed, or disgraced himself by refusing to do so ; but fate was on his side and played his game, as he accurately guessed it must do. He had looked forward with uncanny prescience in this matter and contemplated the reaction to his desires in those vitally concerned ; and he had known that his father was likely to oppose them ; while, in Linda's own family, Gerald knew that her mother and brothers would rejoice at the match, but trusted that her father might be inspired by Mr. Pye to refuse. If all supported Linda, then he must find himself in a difficult position ; but he guessed the luck was with him and had already sought to waken a doubt in the wheelwright's mind concerning himself. He needed antagonism, for it was necessary to his purpose.

Her father followed his wife's advice and did not approach Linda on the subject of the recent walk in the twilight ; but it was not Ivy who decided him against speaking. Mr. Pye had spent an hour with Richard in the orchard and mentioned that his son was likely to return. It occurred to Simon that Challice might know the reason withheld from himself ; but

Dick could not help him. He had ere now dismissed Gerald from his mind, though the elder's information brought him back again. He told Ivy and she hid the quickened interest such news awakened; while a little later Linda's mother received a rich item of news from the post office that again revived her hopes and enriched her dreams.

It came in confidence from Susan Mingo and was only given after Ivy's faithful promise to tell it again to none. A small registered parcel had arrived for Linda and travelled officially through Susan's hands.

'I tell you, Ivy,' she said, 'though I'm doubtful whether under the laws of the post office I should do so. But we're old friends and you won't let it go a spot further. It may mean nothing at all. The address was typewritten. I know young Mr. Pye's penmanship, because he wrote a good few letters while he was here and he might not choose to divulge he was writing to Linda. But something valuable came, no doubt, else it would not have been registered. Very like she'll tell you next time she goes home.'

But Ethelinda kept her parcel to herself. It contained a letter from Gerald and a ring—a sapphire and two small diamonds set in platinum. He was coming back in three days' time, and she was to make no mention of the matter, or wear the ring until he set it on her finger. Another knew of the gift, however, and that was Arthur Tidy, who delivered it. Thus Gerald's symbol became matter for consideration among the loafers at the inn and they guessed accurately at its probable nature. The postman felt under no pledge of secrecy and linked the parcel with previous events.

But the letter none ever saw save Linda herself, nor did she guess its import, though she felt it. What it had been too soon to say, young Pye wrote. He was a rationalist in his

own passions and refined them for their subtler satisfaction ; but to awaken passion in a woman afforded him the acme of enjoyment, just as there are men who win greater pleasure from making a fellow-man drunk, than from drinking themselves. Such was Gerald.

Linda avoided her home for the present, wore her ring in secret and allowed her mind to dwell on the majesty of the giver. She felt bewildered under the weight of love he had awakened and counted the days until his return. Linda felt that the path of love had run for her with miraculous smoothness and already anticipated the surprise and delight of her family when such a triumph came to be known. Only in one direction could she feel that any doubts existed, but it did occur to her that Mr. Pye might possibly protest at such an alliance. He was not proud, yet to learn that his only son desired to marry so far beneath him might easily waken disappointment, if not actual opposition. But she trusted Gerald to win his father, for he had told her in the past that, albeit not demonstrative, Simon was devoted to him. Indeed, the young man had prophesied that his parent would be delighted and hasten to congratulate him on such good fortune. Thus the future offered no real cloud for Ethelinda and she only longed to feel her lover's kisses on her lips again.

He came late one night after warning Mr. Pye to expect him ; but it was not until the following morning that he made his announcement. Gerald had planned the future very carefully and designed to pay the briefest visit. His news broken and the reaction to it ascertained, he proposed to depart and leave subsequent events to himself and Linda alone. He knew that, so far as his father was concerned, much might depend on his manner of announcing the engagement, and for that reason he saw Simon without Linda and struck a note not likely to create a favourable impression.

He was casual, even a little flippant, and took it for granted that his parent would applaud.

‘You’ll be pleased, of course,’ he said, ‘for you’ve always preached the dignity of married life and all that, Dad. I adore Linda Challice : she’s the only woman I ever met that I could think of as a permanent partner ; and by good luck she adores me too. I’m robbing you, I’m afraid, but house-maids are cheap, no doubt, whereas wives like Linda are expensive as a rule. We shall be tremendously happy together, and she won’t clash with her people, or create any social bothers for you, because as soon as we’re married, I shall take her into her new life, wean her away from this rustic existence and give her plenty to think about in my circle. She’s clever and will soon tumble to my ways and make me proud of her. Of course, nobody matters but you and I want you to agree, and I also want you to be sporting and lend a hand with the new establishment. We must launch out in pretty good style. I can’t go on living in chambers, and cheap ones at that, after I’m married. But there’s no hurry. The future’s in her hands and I’ll clear out in a day or two and leave her to say when she’d like to be married. She’ll want her family round her, no doubt, and enjoy the applause and anticipation for a bit. Say you’re pleased, Dad, then I’ll go and find her and you can bless us.’

Simon listened and was disturbed. The immediate effect of his son’s announcement arose from the manner of it, which he felt to be casual and offensive. He cared not so much that Gerald should take his support and approval for granted ; but he found himself almost indignant that the young man could approach the subject in this spirit. A strange emotion awoke in him : a sympathy for Linda and a desire to champion her and her family. He knew them well by this time and entertained the highest opinion of Richard and his

daughter. His son's information awoke a strong dislike in Simon—so strong that he felt time must pass before he could formulate any answer, or commit himself to support the lovers. The consciousness that time must be demanded increased his doubts ; but he would not speak until Gerald grew impatient and challenged him.

‘ Well, Dad : Can't you say anything ? ’ he asked. ‘ Surely there's only one thing to say ? I've backed a winner if ever a man did on this earth, and if you doubt it, you can surely take my word for it. You were never one to strike out for class and all that. I was the stickler. Mother taught me a lot of class prejudice ; but when a man falls in love, that sort of trifle goes by the board. What's biting you and keeping you so glum ? You wouldn't be ashamed of a beauty like Linda for a daughter-in-law, surely ? ’

‘ No,’ answered his father. ‘ I can answer that question as any reasonable man ; but I am not prepared to consider these matters without considerable thought, Gerald. That is only just to you both. A great deal appears to me involved in the suggestion of this engagement, and there are others to be thought of as well as yourself and the girl. She is not of age, I believe, and, in any case, her parents have to be considered before me. Do they know of this betrothal ? ’

‘ They don't. I told Linda to keep it a secret till I'd seen you. Sorry you're so frosty, Dad. I'm going over to see Linda's mother now, and I'd like to take Linda with me, if you've no objection.’

Simon considered.

‘ Don't be precipitate. I would suggest, if you please, that I was the bearer of this news, Gerald. Have you any objection to leaving it until the afternoon ? Meantime I will visit Church Cottage myself. Then Linda and you can go later. I should like time to reflect also, for I am not by any means

assured that you are contemplating a wise action. It is in your favour that you should have let me be the first to hear of it ; but you must forgive me if I ask for a little time before I discuss it and all it means.'

His son was well pleased at this reply, for it hinted at the opposition he desired ; but he pretended annoyance and surprise.

'Damn it all !' he said. 'One would think I was going to break a bank to hear you. It isn't criminal for a man of my age and prospects to take a wife, is it ? You can't possibly have a shadow of objection to her, and I am not aware that you have any objection to me.'

He departed upon this speech and left his father to his thoughts.

Simon endeavoured to keep calm and view the incident with reason. He found that his doubts rested on his son and no other. Then he decided to seek Richard Challice at the smithy, put on his hat, lighted his pipe and set out. He saw Gerald and Linda in the orchard ground as he went ; but they did not observe him.

Challice, however, proved to be up the country at a special task and John Caryl could not say when he might return. He guessed that Richard was unlikely to be home before nightfall. Mr. Pye then determined to go and see Linda's mother ; but he was again disappointed, for Mrs. Challice had gone to the city and would not be back until tea-time. Verity it was who answered his knock and he decided to speak with her.

'Let me come in for five minutes and talk to you then, ma'am,' he said. 'Something a good deal out of the common has happened, Verity, and it concerns you people and I'd so soon have your opinion on it as anybody's. I've been looking for Richard, but he's away.'

‘Come in, Master,’ she answered; and he presently sat opposite her chair, praised a cactus with red tassels that adorned the window and then told his tale.

‘Light your pipe, Verity—you may need it. I needed mine after listening to my son this morning. He’s come back. He might have written it all and left me time—and given you people time. But he chose to come back, which was natural in the circumstances.’

She looked at him.

‘For God’s love, don’t say you mean Linda?’ she asked. He did not answer directly.

‘You want to look all round a clash of this sort,’ he said ‘—look every way but back. What’s done is done. Now it’s a nasty, selfish sort of cruelty to block the happiness of other people just for the sake of your own happiness. We’re prone to do that if we think the happiness of another man or woman—innocent though it may be—will cast a shadow on our own. A dog-in-the-manger policy and always mean. But before what I’ve heard to-day, Verity, I feel we have got to consider the happiness of those concerned—their true happiness rather than what they think they’re going to get out of it.’

‘For Lord’s love, say what you came to say,’ she interrupted. ‘How can I tell about it if I don’t know what’s happened? Is it to do with our Linda, or not?’

‘My son wants to marry Linda,’ he replied.

‘I thought you might be coming to that.’

‘Yes; and she has agreed to marry him—so he says. I haven’t seen her yet.’

‘What he says and what he means are tolerable different most times with his sort,’ she answered bluntly, ‘and since you’ve come to me, Master, you’d best and fairest to heed what I say. I’m going to speak straight, and if you don’t like

it you must lump it, because my granddaughter is one of the few people left on earth I care twopence about. She's precious to me and to her father.'

'Quite right: My mind is open,' he said. 'But on the face of it I do not much like the idea of this match, Verity.'

'And why: I'll tell you for why. You don't know anything about Linda, but you do know Linda's father, because you've been pleased to give him your friendship, and he's the manner of good man that you favour. And you know your son and you know his story whatever it may be. You're a lot too honest yourself, Master, to let this go, and if you did let it go, I'd use my last pinch of strength with Dick to rise up and forbid it.'

'You're against it by instinct, Verity. It can't be from knowledge, because you know nothing about my son.'

'I know this much: he's a liar,' she said, 'and you that are straight know that as well as me. Let me say what my instinct tells me, and you can tell me I'm a liar in my turn if it's in your better knowledge to contradict. Your son is a very fine man—outside; but I'll stake my life he's rotten inside. I'm old and my eyes ain't what they was and my ears ain't what they was; but they cried a warning and they told me the truth about him. He's false, Master—built so. He's no man to be married, and so like as not he knows it himself; but he'd stick at nothing to come by what he wants, and the reason why you heard this tale about marriage is because Linda's a Challice and he's found where he stands as to that. I wouldn't trust him with any girl. He's got love-hunter stamped on his lips. He's himself—born so—and I'm not blaming him. If he can only get Linda by marrying her, he might go that far perhaps. I doubt even that. But belike you'll say I'm telling too much. There's my cards on the

table—mine and my son's, because when I've talked to Dick and told him a lot more than I can tell you in common decency, then he'll be up against this with all his might.'

She panted after her long speech and Simon begged her not to excite herself.

'Be calm, Verity. Take it quiet like I am. You haven't annoyed me in the least—quite the opposite,' he assured her. 'It comes down to a very simple problem,' he went on. 'Assuming that his intentions are strictly honourable, as they say, Verity, which goes without saying, because he would not have the effrontery to be false on such a sacred subject—assuming that, have we a right to trust their affection and believe they will be the complement of each other in character and their union will be blessed for them both, or must we feel convinced to the contrary?'

She followed him with mother wit.

'Ask yourself that, then, if you doubt,' replied Verity, 'and before you do, Master, ask yourself this. What qualities in your son's character are going to better Linda? What has he got in him that she lacks, which would make her the better and finer and happier than she is if she had 'em? You only know Linda for a good young servant who does her job honest and thorough, and is uncommon beautiful to look upon by the will of God; but I know her for a fine, fearless young woman with a good heart and a clean mind—clean as the new fallen snow. And what has he got to him and his manner of life that will make her heart bigger or her mind finer and her future happier? She's ignorant same as folk like us all are; but will his wisdom make her wiser, or make her better, or more usefuller in the world? And what would her simplicity and her virginity be to him but a passing pleasure till he'd robbed her of both? Ask yourself, I say. And would her inborn fineness make him fine? Never!'

‘You hate him, Verity,’ sighed Mr. Pye. ‘It’s clear to me that you hate him.’

‘You don’t hate at my age,’ she answered. ‘Your fires be burned too low to hate ; but they bant burned too low to love your own flesh of the second generation. It ain’t for me to say more. I don’t hate him ; but I wouldn’t trust him with a dog’s life, let alone a woman’s.’

Simon got up to go.

‘The father in me ——’ he began, then broke off. ‘But we can cut that out. I’ve had to cut a good many things out of my life, and it’s none the worse, I dare say. Fatherhood’s an accident and doesn’t alter character, though it well might sometimes if you’re blessed in it. You’ve been blessed in motherhood. You’ve got a very good son, and I’d do nothing willingly to oppose the wishes of that son. Dick’s a strong man when it comes to essentials, though too hopeful, if one can be too hopeful. I’ll do this, Verity. I’ll support Mr. Challice in the matter. I’m sorry for him ; but the brunt is on his shoulders if what you say is true. He’ll have you on one side in the matter and his family on the other ; but you can tell him this. I’m not neutral ; I’m not going to oppose his wishes in any particular. What he decides will find me agreeable ; and if I can help him in his decision by any act of mine, I shall perform it.’

The old woman wept with relief.

‘Thank the Powers, Master ! I’d beg no more than that. Have mercy on that girl and keep ’em apart whatever they say.’

‘Don’t cry—light your pipe and trust all to be well,’ he answered, then left her wondering, for the old woman’s bitter antagonism mystified him. How, Simon asked himself, could this ancient and benighted mind, credulous of fairy tales and folk lore, be yet acute enough to read character from

nothing but a face and a voice ? He rebelled with his head, but knew with his heart that she might be right, for from experience he could combat none of her hard words.

When Mr. Pye returned home, Gerald brought Linda before him blushing and shy. The interview was painful for a soft-hearted soul, and Simon had never seen the girl look more distractingly beautiful. He would have liked to smile upon her, kiss her and congratulate the pair of them ; but he was cold and reserved. Verity's entreaties echoed in his ears and he remembered the difficult tears of old age.

Linda was very quick to appreciate the chill of his greeting. She had looked at him and left her lover to talk, but Gerald's joyous rattle fell flat and awakened no swift response. When Simon did speak he addressed the girl.

'You must not think me wanting in my welcome, Linda,' he said. 'I know what you feel and what you think : I was young myself once. But this proposition demands to be weighed carefully and you must be patient with your elders, my dear, until they have time to look at it in all its bearings. You are fortunate, Linda, in having such a father as Mr. Challice—a man just and fair in all his dealings, who will bring to his decision every fine quality he possesses, look all round the question and most certainly decide for the best. What he may determine when he hears this news I cannot say. He may, indeed, demand time to tackle such an unexpected surprise. But it is first and last his affair, and for my part such is my absolute confidence in his judgment that I can only tell you this. Whatever your father decides, I shall support him.

'I feel very sure, my dear, that you will agree with me heartily in all I have told you,' concluded Simon. 'And I trust that my son will do the like. You are not yet of age and, in any case, would not, I well know, question the wisdom of Mr. Challice, or fail to fall in with his decision.'

Mr. Pye in truth felt very far from sure, but he spoke with conviction, and when Gerald began to protest at his father's lack of enthusiasm, he begged him to be quiet and invited Linda to answer. She was nervous and her hand shook a little, so that the sunshine fell on her ring and Simon marked it.

'We never thought much about anything but ourselves, Master,' she said. 'Of course there's a lot to it, sir, that haven't come in our minds yet. But—but neither one of us reckoned anybody was like to be against. I did at first; I was afraid that you might think me no proper match for a son of yours, Mr. Pye; but Gerald vowed you'd never feel that; and you've told me you think well of me and very grateful I am for your kind words. And I'm most willing for Father to decide, because I well know what he'll say and how he'll be so proud as I am myself to be joined up even in this way to you, sir. He thinks to the full so high of you as you do of him and he must think of Gerald as everybody thinks of him.'

'Leave it at that, Linda,' directed Simon. 'Leave it at that. Take my son to see your mother when we have eaten our meal, and, no doubt, when Mr. Challice returns to-night, he will hear all about it.'

Gerald beckoned her behind Mr. Pye's back and without more words they went out together. She was a little cast down, but he showed no depression.

'Just the reaction of age to youth,' he told her. 'You must always remember that Dad didn't draw a winner himself and he's never enthusiastic about anything. I believe he was jolly pleased really. He'll come out of his shell quick enough when he hears what your father's going to say.'

X.

DEPARTURE.

After the midday meal, during which Gerald Pye insisted on helping Linda to attend his father and preserving the changed relations of the trio, he took his betrothed to her home. Ivy was not yet returned, and when her grandmother saw the girl coming, she gathered up her work and ascended to her own room. They entered and Mrs. Challice heard Gerald talking beneath her for a while. Then they went out again; but Verity knew that they would return at a later time and did not emerge any more.

The pair walked boldly side by side through Merton Magna, where Gerald's inevitable red waistcoat challenged various eyes, and their progress was noted by interested sight-seers. Then they turned into Miss Mingo's shop-of-all-sorts.

'She'll know where Mother and Granny may be,' said Linda. 'I haven't seen either of them this longful time. Didn't like to go, because I knew they'd be full of questions I couldn't answer till you came back.'

'Leave me to answer all the questions in future,' he told her.

Susan welcomed them. She happened to know that Ivy Challice was gone to the city and would be back during the afternoon; but she had not seen Verity for some days.

'Feared she might be ailing,' said Miss Mingo, 'but you'd hear if anything had touched her.'

Linda could report no ill news. She was quite unaware of her grandmother's feelings, for the old woman's outburst against Gerald had been kept from her. Indeed, it was well-nigh forgotten. They told Susan the great news and Linda exhibited her ring, whereon, with an eye to future possibilities, the postmistress declared her delight and showed much pleasure.

‘When I handled your registered parcel a bit ago, something told me what was hid inside it. “If that ain’t a tokening ring,” I said to myself, “I never handled one through the post.” Couldn’t tell you for why, but my instinct spoke. And I was right seemingly.’

Susan admired the trinket vastly.

‘Real diamonds and a sophia,’ she said. ‘What richness, Linda! And never looked finer to Mr. Pye than it do on your finger, I’ll warrant!’

They left Miss Mingo presently and, as Gerald returned to Linda’s home, he asked what she might do if her father were to oppose the engagement.

‘Suppose Mr. Challice is against us? Then my Dad would be against us too, if what he said was true.’

But she felt no concern as to that.

‘Mr. Pye wasn’t against us really. He always keeps very calm. I wished he’d shown a bit more friendship, yet he wasn’t unfriendly. And you needn’t to trouble about Father. My father’s never come between me and my happiness in his life, but always thought how he might add to it, Gerald. Never was a father and daughter closer together in their affections than us. He’ll know where my highest happiness is now and be glad—ever so glad.’

The young man said no more and they returned to Church Cottage just as Ivy herself arrived. Then she heard the news and was much elated.

‘A wonderful thing,’ she said, ‘and never to have been thought upon, I’m sure, Mister Gerald! But you can trust Linda to rise to it—I’ll say that to her face. A good daughter like her makes a good wife, and she’ll take her place in your manner of living so clever as the best when she’s learned a bit.’

‘Far cleverer than the best, Mrs. Challice,’ declared Gerald,

and presently they sat and he talked of his means and what it lay in his power to offer his wife.

'We trust you, same as Linda's learnt to trust you, Mister Gerald,' Ivy said, 'and I can speak for her father, I'm very sure. You can tell him these things yourself. And how do Mr. Pye look upon it, if I may ask?'

'We broke it to him this morning and he never guessed I was a marrying man any more than I did myself, so he felt a bit surprised,' answered Gerald. 'I told him that any chap worth his salt would soon find himself a marrying man after he'd once seen Linda and, needless to say, he's fond of Linda already. Being human he soon felt that way. But he's a dry old bird and always sticks up for the formalities. He'll wait for Mr. Challice to take the same line as he does.'

Ivy nodded. She was less sure of her husband than she pretended to be, yet felt no great fear that before a definite offer of marriage and in the light of Linda's joy he would oppose.

Soon after five o'clock Leonard and Samson came home to their tea and declared their pleasure. They were struck dumb, however, at the news—displayed great shyness and vanished swiftly to confer together in private. Gerald asked for Granny, but was told that she had a headache and remained in her room. Ivy alone knew as yet of Verity's attitude, and when Linda proposed to go and tell her grandmother the news, she begged her not to do so until the morrow.

'Granny hates changes,' she said. 'This will be a bit of a shock for a minute, so she had best not to hear before your father tells her. She's old and cranky and don't like young men very much—nor nothing else young and hopeful for that matter. Her chief amusement seems to be crying out against the rising generation. But the only way is to laugh at her.'

Mr. Pye thinks a lot of her funny nonsense, but it ain't nonsense to her.'

'I must get her friendship,' said Gerald. 'She's a wonderful old lady and won't quarrel with me when I know her better.'

He took Linda back to Prospect Place presently, and then she joined Mrs. Butters for a time while he chatted with his father.

'Mr. Challice hasn't returned,' he said, 'but his wife will send him to see you to-night some time when he's heard what's going to happen. Linda's mother is very pleased about it—a good sensible sort of woman, and won't be a nuisance afterwards: I can see that. And the boys were rather overawed. Decent chaps, but not much in them. I didn't see the grandmother. She sounds rather an old terror, though I've heard you say you find her interesting. In any case she won't matter, so we've only got to wait for Challice. I want a quick wedding; then I'll take Linda for a run somewhere before the autumn meetings.'

'What are your plans after the event?' asked Simon.

'Haven't made any. I talked about a house and garden in a suburb; but I shouldn't be fearfully keen about that sort of thing really. Once we're married I don't doubt I shall knock out some sort of plan to suit her. I may chuck the turf if I can think of a job with more promise to it. But I'm too gone on Linda for the minute to bother about anything else. Shall I come in when Dick turns up to see you, Dad?'

'No,' answered his father. 'I must see him alone, Gerald.'

'I'm not taking orders from anybody but Linda in any case,' he answered. 'But we must assume the man is fairly intelligent and not prepared to quarrel with me, or her.'

'He won't quarrel and he won't issue any orders,' replied

Mr. Pye. 'That would not become him and I have never known Richard to do anything unbecoming. But his daughter's future is still in his keeping, not yours.'

Gerald sought Linda when supper was done and they went out together into the orchard. There he made love and excited her emotions without wakening any element of fear. He was in good spirits, for, by a sort of instinct, he began to feel his father in opposition, and by his own flippancy and an apparent indifference concerning the future with Linda, he had increased Simon's uneasiness of set purpose. They dallied long under a starry night and the man's intention was to keep her away from his father's house until Richard had come and gone. This he succeeded in doing, and when presently Linda started with amazement to hear the church clock strike eleven, they returned, to find Mrs. Butters sitting up in a sour humour. She told them that Mr. Challice had called, stayed for half an hour with Simon and then gone again. As for Mr. Pye, he had retired to bed.

Gerald read the portents as favourable and himself retired, but he was moving early before the rest of the household had risen and proposed to waken Simon that he might know where he stood. He changed his plan, however, for from the bedroom window, which faced north, he saw Richard in the orchard working before he went to his own work. He dressed swiftly therefore, went out and approached him.

'Morning, Challice!' he said. 'Early birds both. Well, how is it to be, my friend?'

Richard was surprised, but he had anticipated the ordeal soon or late.

'Didn't your father tell you last night?' he enquired. 'I made my meaning clear, Mister Gerald.'

'He'd gone to bed when we came in. And he's snoring this morning, so I didn't wake the old boy. Of course there

are some things a man like me can take for granted and I imagine this is one of them. But Dad said you were going to be the big noise, because Linda's not of age. Well, what about it? May I take it for granted you're graciously pleased?

He assumed a hectoring and aggressive manner and indicated some measure of annoyance. But Challice gave him the answer that he most desired, and from that moment Gerald was calm and courteous, hiding both his satisfaction and the secret anger that Dick's reply aroused.

'No, sir,' answered the wheelwright. 'I've given proper thought to what you want and what Linda wants, and I'm against. No need to argue, or say words that would hurt you and make her suffer. I'm not wishful to do that. And you must please understand I've done nought with haste. But after proper thought on such a big question as it demanded from me, I'm quite certain that, apart from my own strong feelings in the matter, it would be a very great mistake if Linda was to marry into another world, same as she would do when she took you.'

'And what did my father say to that nonsense?'

'Your father is quite of my way of thinking and was glad when I told him that it couldn't be, Mister Gerald.'

'You don't think I'm good enough for Linda?'

'I'm not to judge of your goodness, sir, and I'm very wishful if you won't make a personal matter out of this, nor probe into my feelings. Far better you listen to them older than yourself and take it as final without going into no details. My only wish is for my daughter to be a happy woman in time to come, and all that you need to know is that I don't think she'd be a happy woman very long if she married you.'

'I see. Well, it's a free country, Challice, and you have a

right to your opinions, like everybody else. What they may be founded on I can't pretend to guess. I'm clean and healthy and self-respecting. My means are adequate. All particulars are at your service. You know my father and know that I shall inherit a substantial income. I don't come out of what they call the "top drawer," but I can hardly suppose you are waiting for a Duke to marry Linda, lovely though she is. I've a right, don't you think, to ask for something a little definite? Because, though you decree I may not marry Linda, if your keen observation has marked some grave defects in me, it would be only sporting to tell me what they are, so that I may try to correct them.'

He spoke genially and smiled while he did so.

'Best to leave all that,' answered the other. 'I told you I didn't want to stand in no sort of judgment upon you. It's enough that I'm sure as I can be you ain't suited to my girl. It's enough I don't see you marrying Linda and I won't stand for it.'

'So much for love's young dream then,' said Gerald. 'Rather brutal and melodramatic and overbearing, if you'll forgive me for saying so, and the very last thing ever I expected. You led me to imagine you had some common sense and liked me well enough. But with all my unknown faults, which doubtless you have at your finger-ends, I'm law-abiding. I shall, of course, bend to your paternal wishes and only hope for Linda that she will soon get over this sorrow and find a man more worthy of her.'

Richard was dimly aware that the other did not speak the things in his mind. An outburst would have seemed more natural and distressed him far more; but Gerald's attitude made him better satisfied with what he had done and more convinced that he had done right.

'If you mean what you say, that's all to the good, Mister

Gerald,' he answered, 'and if you don't, it's no great odds, sir.'

The younger hated him now very heartily and enjoyed the sensation of hate. He would have liked to explode and even strike Richard to the earth ; but he only smiled and reflected that there are harder blows than any with a fist.

'I know you don't mean to insult me, Richard,' he answered. 'I'm trying hard to see this thing with your eyes ; but that's beyond my power. If ever a man had thought and planned and dreamed how to make a woman happy, I was that man after I fell in love with your girl. But no doubt your idea of her happiness is more important than mine, or her own. She will never despise me as you appear to do, because she knows me so much better ; but we needn't talk any more about it. You've got the whip-hand, and of course there's nothing left for me but to feel the lash. I'll go to-day. I don't sing small to you, or my father, or anybody else. I can bite on the bullet as well as another, and though this is the biggest facer I ever had, I shall stand up to it.'

'A very manly way to take it, sir.'

'Thank you. Good-bye.'

Gerald was gone. He returned to his father's house, telephoned for a taxi-cab to come out from the city and then sought Linda before Simon was up to breakfast. He got her alone and defined the position swiftly.

'Listen,' he said, 'and keep your nerve, Linda, because you're going to hear something ugly. But before I tell you, understand this. You're my life now, and if you don't come to me I shan't want to go on living. I can't live without you and I'm not going to try.'

'You're my life too, Gerald. I'd trust you with my life and soul for ever,' she said.

'That's what you've got to do, darling. And if you trust

me, the rest of the world doesn't count. Come close, close inside my arms, where you'll be for evermore before long. Your father has refused to let us be married. Steady ! . Keep your mind clear. I've just had a long talk with him and he is convinced that we should not be happy together. And my father agrees with him. All your other people know better ; but I argued vainly. It wasn't for me to say anything rash or rude. I respect both your father and mine ; but I know they are horribly wrong and I am only sorry—bitterly sorry for your dear sake—they could have made such an appalling mess of it.'

'But why—why?' asked Linda.

She had turned very pale and was shaking within his arms ; but he felt glad to see her self-possessed.

'My first question, of course, and Mr. Challice had no reasons to give. I invited his confidence as my right, yet he could find no fault at all—merely advanced his unsupported opinion that I shouldn't make you happy. It's so utterly mad ! I argued with him gently, man to man, but was not able to change his fixed determination. We parted good friends ; but I'm afraid, Linda, there's only one thing for you and me to do. If I thought you could influence him I'd stop till you had tried ; but you can't. It's impossible. He has some deep-rooted objection to me—God knows why—and that only leaves one course open to us.'

'We can't part, Gerald—you don't mean that.'

'Only death is going to part me from you,' he said. 'Only death, or your own command that I should leave you. I have been patient and civil to your father, and I shall be patient and civil to my own in a minute ; but everybody on earth is only a shadow before you and your happiness, and this mighty first love of mine centres and lives on the thought of your happiness. Nothing else means anything to me.'

‘That Father should have come between!’ murmured Linda. ‘I’d sooner have believed the heavens could fall.’

‘It staggered me awfully, too, for I never thought he disliked me. He was always so frank and friendly. My heart went out to him after I loved you, Linda. I blessed his name just because he was your father. But there’s no time to wonder about that now. The next question you must answer, and my life depends on your answer. Will you do what I want you to do? Don’t answer, though, till I tell you what it is.’

‘I trust you to do right as I’ve always trusted you to do right, Gerald.’

‘God bless you for that,’ he said. ‘Now listen, beloved. I’m going in an hour—going to come back very soon indeed. But only you will know that I have come back. I shall be here to fetch you and make your departure as comfortable and easy as possible. Nobody is going to know you’re going till you’ve gone. And by the time they have done wondering, you will be back to see them with your husband.’

She nodded.

‘That’s how I’d wish for it to be, Gerald,’ she said.

‘I shall write a letter and direct it to the care of Miss Mingo at the post office for you. In that letter you will hear exactly what we’re going to do and where I shall wait for you, Linda. Nobody will know you’ve had that letter but the post-mistress and nobody else will see it.’

He reflected a moment.

‘Call for it next Monday. Don’t answer it, but do just what it says. I want everything to go your way and to save you every atom of trouble. Remember—Monday it will be there.’

They talked a little longer and then Simon came for his breakfast and Linda departed to bring it.

Gerald greeted his father cheerfully.

‘Morning, Dad. I needn’t ask you for your news. I saw Challice working in the apple trees and went out to him before you were awake. He told me, much to my regret, that he didn’t see his way to letting his girl marry me ; and I’ve just told her. We’re cut up a bit, naturally. It seems very unreasonable of you both, if I may say so—especially as he declined to give any reasons. One would rather like to know what sort of villain you both think me. But the law is clear apparently. Linda’s not of age and we must wait until she is. I shan’t change and I don’t think she will. Anyway, I hope not. What were your reasons, by the way, for agreeing with her father ? But perhaps you have nothing tangible too ?’

Mr. Pye did not answer immediately.

‘It’s a case of the least said soonest mended, Gerald,’ he replied at last. ‘One’s only wish is that a painful difference of opinion need not become common talk here. No need whatever to go into details. For my part, I can only say that I heard Challice and I think him right and wise. One needn’t give reasons and I don’t want to speak a word that can make your present disappointment harder to bear. But I will say this : I shall judge of you by the way you take it. My opinion of you is likely to be largely influenced by your future conduct in this matter. You are young and impetuous, but very earnestly I hope you will take a dignified and worthy line. The future is the grand endowment of your generation and you can afford to be patient and look forward. Let the future test you and find how you and Linda regard your devotion in two years’ time. That is all I have to say.’

Gerald laughed and set about his breakfast.

‘You’ll see you’ve bred a winner one day, Dad,’ he promised, and Simon earnestly trusted that it might be so.

An hour later Gerald drove away from Merton Magna, while the sun sank out of her sky for Linda Challice. She was not so much cast down as mystified before these startling experiences. From her point of view a thing utterly impossible to explain had happened, for when Mr. Pye decreed that her father must be arbiter, Linda supposed that only universal congratulations remained to meet her triumph. A thousand mysteries confronted her on Richard's refusal, and when her lover was gone, she had time to reflect and pass through a period of deep disquiet. The future being assured, no very poignant sorrow attended Linda's thoughts at first, but presently her situation awakened grief, because it argued disparities between her father and herself that she had imagined impossible. He had set her first in his regard and displayed devotion from her earliest memories; no cloud had ever chilled their love at any time; no shadow of difference ever fallen between them. And now, without a word of warning from him, or a hint that he undervalued the man of her choice, this terrific decision had come to her ears—not from her father himself, but the dearest being on earth to her.

Her first desire was to see Richard and hear his reasons, but she did not see him that day and, at a later time, Mr. Pye explained why. Towards evening he spoke with Linda, guessed that she had much on her mind to sadden her and said that her father had asked him to soften the blow a little before he met her.

Simon prosed on about disparity of character and other futile points; but he added something of what he had said to Gerald and hoped that time might heal the wounds.

‘It depends upon yourselves, my dear,’ he assured her. ‘If your regard is founded on something deeper and more trustworthy than the infatuation of two unusually good-

looking young people for each other, then I am very sure it is going to stand the passing strain of separation and come through that ordeal successfully. Never think I doubt you, or that your father doubts you. He loves you better than anybody on this earth, Linda, and has so loved you ever since you were old enough to show your character. You are like him—honest, steadfast and trustworthy—and these qualities will appear in your love—both for him and Gerald. It is not you whom your father doubted, and perhaps if he had loved you less, he might have been quicker to please you and my son. But there are reasons in his opinion why time must try Gerald, and I entirely agree with his good sense. It was no pleasure to him to cross you, but you must go to him with the old love unshaken and the old faith and trust. No girl ever had a better father.'

'And I'm sure no father ever had a better, straighter man for a son than you have, Mr. Pye,' ventured Linda. 'The sad mystery to me is that Father could know him and feel a doubt.'

'The future remains in which we may hope his doubts will be dispelled, my dear,' answered Simon; but still Linda wondered. She was better acquainted with the future than Mr. Pye and liked to think how swiftly the minds of these two elderly men would be disabused of their unworthy fears; but in her security and independence, supported by the knowledge that she would soon stand beyond the reach of either, she asked one more question.

'Couldn't you have told Father that he was wrong to doubt such a one as your Gerald, dear Mr. Pye?' she asked. 'You know him better than any knows him but me, and couldn't you have told Father you'd go bail for him and trust him in a sacred thing like our love for each other?'

But Simon was not perturbed.

‘That is not such a difficult question to answer as you might think, Linda,’ he said. ‘And I’m rather glad you asked it, because it clears the air. I am indeed Gerald’s father, but I know very little more about him than Mr. Challice does. We have seen practically nothing of each other since he grew up and his way of life does not appeal to me any more than to any other sensible man. Therefore I found myself in complete agreement with your father when he declined to consider the match at present. He is emphatically right in my opinion. An open mind was brought to the matter by us both, and knowing you far better than I know my son, Mr. Challice feels that time cannot be better spent than in patience. He trusts you to be patient and brave, because he knows you are built that way ; while as for Gerald, he has only to prove himself equally capable of patience and bravery, and your father will be the first to acknowledge them. There is really no hardship, and I will say for Gerald that he has taken the matter with more restraint and good temper than I should have expected.’

Fortified by his remarks, Linda met her father the next day. The need to delude him hurt her much, but she consoled herself that his own strange action had made it necessary. She longed for the time to pass swiftly, that he might learn the truth and regret his failure of judgment. Richard spoke much as Mr. Pye had spoken and she listened quietly and made no attempt to argue. She avoided her mother and her brothers, in fear their sympathy and indignation might tempt her to say too much, for Gerald had warned her to give no hint of their intentions. So she took it very quietly, to her father’s relief, though her mother guessed and hoped that more might be hidden than she knew. Neighbours supported this suspicion, for a man or two and Miss Mingo doubted not that more might soon be heard.

‘ Watch out,’ advised Susan. ‘ Young Pye wasn’t built to take things lying down, Ivy.’

And remembering his last words to her, Mrs. Challice still cherished secret hopes.

For Ethelinda there were swift, secret preparations but no hesitation. She heard her father more than once on the subject and noticed that he spoke more definitely than Mr. Pye. Indeed, he determined her and banished any remaining doubts. For he made no mention of patience and shut the door on hope. He lacked much gift of words, but had declared his sorrow to know that she must sorrow, and for the rest begged her to trust him. He heaped no censure on Gerald Pye, yet assured her it was utterly impossible that he could make her a happy woman. She left him silently and learned how deep a gulf separates the love of a parent and a lover. To have set any man’s wish higher than her father’s had been impossible until now. Nothing unjust or unfair had ever come from him, and she contrasted his old-time ardour on her account with the indifference of her mother and brothers. But now he was monstrously changed and blind to reality. Her affection faltered and only the safe, sure future prevented her from charging him with tyranny. She could not understand why Richard had found any spot upon her sun. It almost seemed that the fact of Gerald’s love for her had turned her father from him. She could only look forward to the reconciliation when he found his grievous error ; but she told herself that she would never cease to wonder how he had made it.

For the rest, Linda hoped the incident would not escape to make talk in Merton Magna. There must be plenty to chatter about when she disappeared, but she trusted that nothing might now happen to face her with painful pity and needless questions. The thing, however, was quickly known

and could not be hid. Leonard Challice revealed it at the bar of the 'Cat and Fiddle' without demur and invited David Beedell's opinion.

'Why the mischief should you think my father turned down Mister Challice when he offered for Linda?' he asked. 'And old Pye against 'em too.'

'Men like them can be trusted to know best, Leonard,' answered the innkeeper.

'Chance of a lifetime for any girl, you'd say,' reflected Arthur Tidy. 'How did he take it, Len? He's the sort that know what they want, and if they can't get it one way, they will another. I'll bet "Robin Redbreast" ain't done with yet.'

'Have he gone?' asked Saul Date.

'He's gone,' answered Leonard. 'He went the morning after he was turned down. He saw my mother, and he didn't go with his tail between his legs either. Pretty cocky he was, she said.'

'He'll best 'em yet,' foretold Tidy. 'You can't keep a chap like him down.'

'What does your sister think upon it?' asked Beedell.

'I don't know what she thinks,' answered Linda's brother, 'but I'd say she won't come to heel very quick. She ain't that sort.'

Elsewhere Verity had sat with her son upon the clearing by the lime-kiln and heard of his talk with Linda.

Richard was satisfied with the turn of events and trusted time to heal the hurts.

'I talked as straight to her as I did to him,' he said. 'Just direct and no nonsense. We shan't have no lasting trouble, Mother. He kept his nerve tolerable well and didn't forget himself, or show anger. And, of course, Linda heard me patient too. She'll know it was her good, and only hers, that made me do it.'

But the old woman did not share his confidence.

‘Watch ’em like a hawk all the time,’ she said. ‘Don’t think it’s all over because you want it to be all over. You can’t trust man or woman in love and the straightest will go crooked if they’re crossed at that. I’d sooner they had flared up and cussed you good and hard and made a rumpus. Take close thought for Linda and see her often and ask Mr. Pye how she looks to feel to him. Now’s the dangerous time, Dick.’

So she counselled him and, little guessing, inspired a future act to the man’s own destruction.

(To be continued.)

AN OLD MAN’S COUNSEL.

*If you would see her at her loveliest
Seek to behold her on a stately stair,
While sunbeams break in aureoles round her head,
A lofty stairway, softly tapestried,
So softly that each footfall falls caressed,
Like petals floating down on buoyant air.
As she descends you will look up at her
In attitude that fits a worshipper :
An angel earthward condescends to glide
To hear a mortal’s wooing—and abide.*

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

SOME BUTTERFLIES OF HIGH SUMMER.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL A. H. E. MOSSE, C.I.E.

It is a charming wood where Kent and Sussex meet. Through it winds a peaceful grassy ride. Once at least, during the winter that is past, it has known the silent passage of a hunted fox and witnessed thereafter all the pageantry of the far from silent hunt. Later, with the spring have come the primrose pickers and their baskets, but not in numbers—just a select few who keep the secret of the most delectable primrose path in the whole of Sussex.

To-day the hunt is but a memory, though a bunch of pheasant's feathers which the wind has begun to scatter may be an indication that that old fox is yet alive to run some other day. The primrose path has vanished for another year and I doubt whether man or horse has, for a month past, set foot within the bounds of the wood until our intrusion this afternoon calls forth a noisy protest from a pair of jays who look upon the place as their own domain.

The real owners of the ride just now, however, are the butterflies. For this is July and the bramble is a-flower. Quite an ordinary combination. But the nectar stored by the bramble's blossom makes a special appeal to the fastidious taste of two of the aristocrats among our British butterflies, the beautiful Silver-washed Fritillary and that elegant creature the White Admiral. It seems indeed to be, as a rule, the only flower in which the latter takes any interest whatever.

Neither of these butterflies is to be found everywhere, while the habitations of the White Admiral are decidedly

localised. It is true that during the past two or three summers, thanks possibly to the dry weather which for a couple of successive seasons had favoured a generous survival of the winter's dangers by the tiny hibernating caterpillars, the White Admiral extended its range, being unusually abundant in this part of England, and individuals were seen in a number of places that ordinarily know them not. And it was interesting to note that the adventurous spirit which carried a few of these beyond their accustomed sylvan resorts was apparently accompanied by a temptation to indulge in unaccustomed sweets, for on two occasions a White Admiral was observed to partake of the feast spread by the purple buddleia, beloved of Tortoiseshell and Peacock.

It remains a fact that both Fritillary and White Admiral are essentially woodland butterflies; also that there are woods and woods. We may therefore count ourselves fortunate in having discovered, in the rides and outskirts of this particular wood, a specially favoured haunt of both these delightful insects. It is well worth a visit at this time of year in order to make their acquaintance.

The sylvan scene has few more pleasing pictures to offer to the lover of nature than the sight of scores of these lovely butterflies disporting themselves about the blossoms in which they delight. It is difficult to decide which presents the more attractive spectacle—the graceful gliding flight, alternating with sudden dips and dives in and out among the hazel bushes, of the White Admiral; or the leisurely alighting of the Silver-washed Fritillary as it pauses, with black-spotted orange-tawny wings outspread, to sip the honey from its favourite flower, then rests awhile with wings upright and closed so as to exhibit the delicate washing of silvery streaks on the silky green ground of its underside.

Not that the Silver-washed is the only member of the

Fritillary clan to frequent our wood. The little Pearl-bordered Fritillaries—of two species—that were here in May and June have disappeared, but both the High Brown and Dark Green Fritillaries are to be seen. The former is another of the bramble-blossom's lovers who, as it drops on to an adjacent bloom, challenges you to compare with the silver-washed pinions that you have been admiring the brilliant spotting of purest argent which adorns its own. But no anxiety as to your verdict delays the uncurling of the slender tubular proboscis with which it proceeds to ravish the flower's heart.

The Dark Green Fritillary might be the High Brown's twin, were it not for the green powdering on its underside. To it, however, the allurements of the woodland ride make no appeal. Rather the open country of down or moorland, where it flies far and fast, pausing to exact a tribute from the tall thistle waving in the wind. Yet this handsome butterfly is no stranger to the outskirts of our wood where the hazel thickets with which it ends border on the slopes of a grassy hillside. Here, hovering above the heads of purple knapweed, the Dark Green Fritillary lords it among the plebeian throng of Meadow Browns; and the little people of the butterfly tribe, brilliant Copper and lively Skipper and dainty Blue, think him, no doubt, a very fine fellow.

Whence have these butterflies derived their popular names? Regarding the Fritillary butterflies there can be no doubt. They have adopted as godmother that old-fashioned flower, the fritillary or snake's-head, to whose spotted petals the general design of the patterns on their wings bears some resemblance.

As for the White Admiral, it was once known as the 'White Admirable'; were it not for the existence of a

Red Admiral I doubt whether its title would ever have taken its present form. The latter—it is still early in the season for him—is a personality of imposing presence, well suited to take the part of an Admiral of the Red. But, though it is decidedly an insect of character, the most distinctive attribute of the White Admiral is elegance, and a feminine appellation—the Painted Lady affords a precedent—would seem more in keeping, both with the demure beauty of its sable and white apparel and with its graceful yet wayward flight. Feminine too is the capriciousness which will favour a particular wood but, for no apparent reason, will ignore its neighbour only a league away.

An entirely charming nymph of the woodland, call her—or him—what you will. Wherefore the White Admiral's name is one to conjure with when butterfly lovers meet together. The primrose gatherers hug their knowledge of the springtime. It is a knowledge that is worth while. But we who are privileged to be partners in the wood's later secret of high summer—we are the favoured of the gods.

COUNTESS CHARMING.

BY MARIE W. STUART.

To be gifted with the beauty and to be destined for the romance of a fairy-tale princess was the lot of Susanna, the daughter of Sir Archibald Kennedy of Culzean. When she appeared in Edinburgh society about the time of the Union of 1707 she was sufficiently dazzling to prove a distraction even in the thick of a political crisis, and the eighteen-year-old beauty found herself courted and flattered by a throng of admirers. Perhaps the most deeply smitten by her charms was Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, who conducted his wooing in fittingly romantic fashion by sending her a flute. When Susanna attempted to play it, however, she found it impossible, and seeking an explanation, she drew forth a little roll of paper that had been screwed up inside. Like many an ardent lover, Sir John had sought to express his passion in rhyme, for the message was a poem beginning :

*‘ Harmonious pipe, how I envye thy bliss
When pressed to Sylphia’s lips with gentle kiss.’*

But alas, the fair Susanna was not for him and he was forced to cover up his disappointment by referring to her as ‘ a lightheaded Beuty ’ unsuited to his matrimonial plans. A more important suitor took the field and eventually carried off the prize. This was none other than Alexander, ninth Earl of Eglintoun, who had already been married twice but who had warned Susanna’s father when asked for advice as to her various wooers, ‘ Bide awee, Sir Archie, my wife’s very sickly.’ His second Countess obligingly

quitted the scene to make room for the triumphant Susanna, who apparently had been destined for years to be his bride, since one day when she had been walking in her father's garden a hawk had settled on her shoulder, bearing on its bells the crest of the Earl of Eglintoun. Could any omen be more in the fairy-tale tradition? Though her husband was so much older than his bride that people dubbed them 'Susanna and the Elder,' the match seemed a happy one until a succession of daughters made the Earl somewhat anxious for a son and heir. Indeed, he threatened his wife with divorce, but nothing could ruffle her calm dignity. She expressed her willingness to leave him if he would give back what he had taken from her. Imagining that she meant her dowry money, he agreed, but Susanna turned on him with the retort, 'Na, na, my lord, that winna do; return me my youth, beauty and virginity, and dismiss me when you please.' Fortunately the birth of a son effectually and eventually closed the argument. In all, she presented her husband with three sons and eight daughters.

In 1729 the Earl died at the age of seventy, leaving his still young and beautiful wife to bring up this large family. In this she was helped by their guardian, Lord Milton, the Lord Justice Clerk. Her letters to him show a delightful informality and humour. She closes one with the words: 'All the ladys here wishes I cou'd wrape them upe in this letter, and send them to you. Lete it unfold one single heart which bears some impressions not unworthy your acceptance.' On another occasion she chides him for not replying to her last three letters: 'I have allmost broke my head with conjectors about the caus of your silance. Was I your mistress, jealousy had broke my heart!' Lord Milton evidently criticised her conduct during a visit to

London when she made a great impression on Lord Isla who entertained her to tea alone in his library. 'In the first part of your letter you seem to be angrie,' she replied, assuming innocent astonishment and daring to write later, 'I'll be glad to hear that Earl Isla is quite well.' But obviously she had no desire to lose Lord Milton's valuable friendship, 'the juile of my heart,' as she described it. Some of her letters strike a deeper note. 'I confess,' she wrote, 'I bild castles in the air, and that the destruction of anie one of thes imaginarie joys wou'd occasion reall woe. I know, too, at the sam time, that to be hapie, expectation shou'd be low, ambition humble, and love quite out of doors; here is a lesson for your strengeth of reason.' Strangely cynical words from one so richly endowed with charm, wealth and rank. When one of her children was ill she broke forth tragically: 'Hope! what art thou but a delusive dream: a toy given ws by Nature to steal from ws our preasent moments?'

She devoted herself whole-heartedly to the upbringing of her son Alexander, who succeeded to the title at the age of six when his stately mother spared no pains to uphold the dignity of his position. At home she always addressed him as 'Lord Eglintoun' and every day the little boy led her ceremoniously to the dinner-table. Shortly before death his father had written a long letter to his heir advising him to keep away from the royal court, 'since we are under the misery and slavery of being united to England. . . . But how does my heart tremble for you,' continued the anxious father, 'when I consider your youth, and what a crowd of flatterers will surround you.' In 1742 the Countess sent the young man to Paris to learn dancing, riding and fencing, and his tutor's letters give an amusing sketch of a pupil evidently not particularly brilliant but one of whom

good had to be reported. 'Though his lordship might possibly bestow his time better, yet I hope his friends will be of opinion he does not employ it ill.' His extravagance in buying antiques and in keeping a coachman and two footmen with richly laced liveries also worried the good man. 'God knows how far it may go,' he wrote to Lord Milton. Nevertheless, the young man showed many pleasant qualities when he grew up. The rigid etiquette of his home life had not crushed natural affections, and on the marriage of his sister Margaret he wrote offering to buy the trousseau, declaring 'You know you have been aleways my chief favourite, and you need not doubt of your continuing so.' What must his mother have thought of his notion that he could be of more service in the Commons than in the Lords and of his whim of 'dispeering' himself, dropping 'the Earl of Eglintoun' and having 'Mr. Alexander Montgomerie' on his visiting cards? On his Ayrshire estates he sought to introduce many agricultural reforms which unfortunately did not render him too popular with his farmers, whom he further annoyed by making them exchange their holdings frequently, as he said 'to prevent their furniture from getting mouldy.' In a letter written to his brother before a duel he shows his interest in his estates in the postscript: 'Don't neglect horse howing if you love Scotland.'

In 1769 the bitterest tragedy of her life came to Susanna; the son and heir whose upbringing she had watched over so anxiously was killed by a poacher whom the Earl had challenged for trespassing on his estate at Saltcoats. An eerie story tells how a servant saw Lord Eglintoun walking up the stairs of his betrothed's home at the very moment of his murder. It is said that his mother never recovered entirely from the shock of this terrible loss.

Archibald, who succeeded his brother as Earl, was evidently an average, mischievous schoolboy. From Eton came bills for the glass he broke and for two-fourteenths of the damage to a roof, that being his share. Again reports had to be twisted into a favourable strain ; his masters confessed he was no scholar, 'yet he has left behind him the character of a sensible, ingenious, manly, well-behav'd boy.' He was destined for the Army and became a Cornet in the Greys, 'for which my heart trambels,' wrote Susanna, who, in spite of her regal bearing, was a true mother at heart, anxious over her young ones and ready to find excuses for their backwardness. Concerning her son's education she declared : 'Sure I shall be greatly blamed. It's not everie bodie will have the justice to (impute) the backwardness of it to the want of the proper sight of his eye. . . . My heart akes with uneasie thoughts about this.'

Concerning Susanna and her beautiful daughters, one of the most delightful of Edinburgh anecdotes tells how crowds used to watch the procession of eight gilded sedan-chairs that emerged from her house in the Old Stamp Office Close carrying the ladies in all their gay finery to dances in the Assembly Rooms. To her girls the Countess bequeathed her impressive stateliness—she was six feet tall—and her dazzling beauty. That she was quite complaisantly conscious of the latter was shown one day when she turned from her mirror to ask Lady Bettie, her eldest daughter, what she would give to be as pretty as her mother. 'Not half as much,' was the retort, 'as you would give to be as young as I am.' In spite of their strict upbringing the young ladies had wills of their own and Lady Mary, one of Susanna's stepdaughters, was unfortunately almost as celebrated a beauty as the Countess. She insisted on marrying contrary to her family's wishes and Susanna

wielded an angry pen when she wrote as follows to the unrepentant bride :

‘ I am surpris’d hou you can aske my opinion in a thing quit dishonourable for my familie, when at the same time you have rejected it when offer’d, with a heart of sincerity for your hapiness and intrest. Your mariage with Captain Cuninghame can never have mine nor no bodie’s approbation. Good God ! what have you don, that you talk of the necessity of ever thinking of such a dead of madness ? You aske me where you shall stie ? Your lete follies hes poote it out of my pour to say your wellcome to my house. How can I be ansuerable for one so indutrous in rewinning of themselvs and there relations ? . . . I must confess that I thinke a verie retired place (at least for sum time) uou’d be of use to you.’

Lady Bettie, too, was most modern in her outlook. Replying to an offer of marriage made to her through Lord Milton she wrote, ‘ I hold it as reason in my matrimonial affairs, that I should either be in love, or marry for money, as I can, I thank God, live independent of any of my relations as to the necessaries of this life.’ It was not till she was thirty-nine that she married Sir John Cuninghame of Caprington. Another daughter, Lady Margaret, had an exciting career, for although her husband, Sir Alexander Macdonald of Macdonald, was faithful to the Government, she assisted Flora Macdonald in effecting Prince Charlie’s escape. Countess Susanna was, of course, an ardent Jacobite, as is proved by the story that the Prince’s portrait hung in her bedroom so that it was the first thing she saw on wakening in the morning. Hence her anger years afterwards when writing to another daughter Frances about ‘ your sistar Makdonald ’ who had been received at Court and had declared to the king that she would never again allow Prince Charles Edward to set foot on her

estates. She pledged her good faith by asking George II to send her two sons to Hanover to be educated and in return she received a pension of £500 a year. Still another daughter dared to marry the man of her choice. This was Lady Grace, whose husband, Cornet Byne of Bland's Dragoons, led her a most unhappy life. One of Susanna's stepdaughters had married 'Union Lockhart' and was said to have been a clever spy in the Jacobite service. On one occasion when certain papers had to be abstracted from the pockets of a Mr. Forbes, she disguised her two good-looking sons as girls and sent them out to promenade the High Street. They soon 'picked up' their victim, carried him off to a tavern, plied him with drink till he fell under the table and brought the documents safely home to their mother.

Even in the midst of so much youth and beauty Susanna continued to reign supreme. Hamilton of Bangour might sing the praises of the Lady Mary, but her stepmother was immortalised by Boyse, by Allan Ramsay and by Dr. Johnson. The dedication to *The Gentle Shepherd* hails her as :

'The Countess of Eglintoun, whose penetration, superior wit, and sound judgment, shine with an uncommon lustre, while accompanied with the diviner charms of goodness and equality of mind . . . for whilst you are possessed of every outward charm in the most perfect degree, the never-fading beauties of wisdom and piety, which adorn your ladyship's mind, command devotion.'

The society she entertained at Eglintoun Castle was most distinguished. At one party of 'musick and dancing' we learn that among the young men present were those destined to become the Earls of Errol, Galloway and Glasgow, with that Lord Kilmarnock who was beheaded on Tower Hill for his devotion to the Jacobite cause. Another report

informs us that there was ‘never so beautiful a figure seen as Lady Eglintoun at a Hunters’ Ball in Holyrood-house, dancing a minuet in a large hoop, and a suit of black velvet, trimmed with gold.’ Some of her glamour must surely have descended to her granddaughter, one of the Rentons of Berwickshire, who was immortalised in the same setting by the novelist Smollett. Young Squire Melford in *Humphry Clinker* goes to a Hunters’ Ball where his heart is enthralled by the Scottish beauties. ‘Between friends,’ he writes, ‘it has sustained some damage from the bright eyes of the charming Miss R——n, whom I had the honour to dance with at the ball.’

Susanna, however, was no mere empty-headed beauty, but had plenty of sound business sense to guide her through her long widowhood. ‘I have been thinking,’ she wrote to Lord Milton, ‘of sum method to keepe upe my present funds, and have at last fixed upon that of a brewarie in the sitadle of Ayr. . . . You know I must provide for time to come, and penorie having no share of my heart, my head must worke my reliefe.’ She was quite capable of fighting her own battles: witness her reference to a certain Major Cochran, the only man who had been ungallant enough to ill-treat her. ‘As his falts are not like a jentlman, I hope to have an opportunity of treating him like a scoundral.’ At Eglintoun Castle she was responsible for the fine plantations that Bishop Pococke admired so much in 1760 and appears, too, to have enjoyed an outdoor life, since in one of her letters she complains of ‘aiks and pains’ caused by ‘wandring in the fields when thos eastrie winds are so penetrating.’

When she settled down at Kilmaurs House she must have found it a sad change from her Edinburgh homes in Old Stamp Office Close or in Little Jack’s Close in the Canon-

gate. 'The house I amin is a very odd one at present, but as I have leave to make the most of it, I hope to make it sum bettar than a ministar's mans. No bodie is fondar of a good house than I am.' It must have been worse than 'odd' seeing that neither rain nor wind could be kept out and the Countess had twice fallen through the floor ! However, she consoled herself with the plentiful supply of coal and busied herself knotting wool fringe for her bed-hangings. Eventually her son gave her Auchans House in Ayrshire, described by Susanna as 'a very lang house quite out of repair.' The move was imperative, however, since Kilmaurs had become 'untolirable.' Old age had no terrors for her. 'I fiell my afflictions, and the approach of time,' she confessed, 'but I hope I shall be able to suffer both with that fortitude of mind as to give other people no trouble.' She boasted a little of her defiance of time : 'Helth, reason, and the common senses, are not the portion of every bodie of my age.' Nevertheless, retirement from the society she had ruled so long must have saddened her. When one of her granddaughters was getting married the Countess had to admit she did not know the prospective bridegroom : 'I have been so long obstructed from the world.' When her son had been made Lord of the Bed-chamber to George III he had tried to coax her to attend the Coronation, probably wishing to show off his beautiful mother. But she refused on the excuse of ceremonial robes being so expensive and perhaps also because of her Jacobite loyalty. This did not prevent her being flattered by the attention of the king and queen. 'They never neglect doicing me the honour of enquiring after me at all thos they think knows me.'

What an event, therefore, must have been the visit of Dr. Johnson and his faithful Boswell to Auchans, where

they found the eighty-five-year-old Countess with 'all the elevation which a consciousness of such birth inspires. Her figure was majestic, her manner high bred, her reading extensive, and her conversation elegant. She had been the admiration of the gay circles of life, and the patroness of poets.' On learning that the doctor had been born the year after her marriage, she charmed him by saying she might have been his mother, called him 'son' and parted from him most affectionately.

Still she lingered on, losing her old friends one by one and amusing herself with the society of a number of rats which she trained to come out of the panelling when she rapped. 'A few years past has alter'd the face of most things to me,' she said. It almost seemed that Death was loath to lay his hand upon that radiant beauty which she preserved to the very end, thanks, it was reputed, to washing in sow's milk, and it was not until she had reached her ninety-first year that her romantic career closed. Truly, as Chambers said, 'Altogether the Countess was a woman of ten thousand !'

THE RURAL PEN.

*'But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man.'*

*The poet of a quiet acre
Must be a constant music maker,
For he absorbs the intense schooling
Of sky and field, and the great ruling
Influences of primal beauties
Broken to the various duties
Of sweetness and a thousand graces.
He breathes the air of solemn places ;
He sees the green Spring's resurrection
Brought to the zenith of perfection.
Learned in the language of the flowers
And the sweet chatter of soft showers,
He makes his music of such matter ;
And from his song the rain-drops patter
Now warm and rich, now with the treason
Of ice beads in the Winter season,
Now with the trouble in the grasses
Of huge drops as the thunder passes
Deluging all the growth of Summer.
Then at a time his song is number
Than low boughs frozen in the floodings
Of brimming dykes. From the strange broodings
Of pine woods in the dim seclusion
Of Winter noons, and the intrusion
Of blue mist in his meditation,
He weaves a theme with no relation*

*To the excited music making
Of early Summer when he was waking
Into his power of song, and shouting
With all the joy of his strong heart's sprouting.
Then from the sounds of brimming ditches
He learns a hymn and straightway pitches
All his instruments of laughter
From his hands, and under the rafter
Of dire faith goes slow and sober
As the sun of late October.
Then, when frozen rivers strangle
All their music, and boughs dangle
Icicles that make their sighing
Like the rattle of one dying,
He grows wild and through the region
Of far frosts his cries are legion
Ringing with an accent hollow
Through desire where none can follow.
Then his songs seem all pretences,
But when sunbeams warm the fences,
And the meadow floods are sinking,
And the warming Earth is drinking
All their moisture in derision ;
When the frost's sharp circumcision
Of Earth's infants is forgotten,
He will shed his gloom as rotten
Boughs are shed when leaves are springing,
And the warming wind is singing
Mockery at what is sleeping
Or lies dead, or slowly creeping
To its death ; and, like his neighbours,
Sun and wind and birds, his labours
Will be happier, quickly tending*

*To the cause of the ascending
 Monarch of a brighter heaven.
 Then the lore of flowers will leaven
 The hard task of sterner measures ;
 Filling labour with the pleasures
 Of delightful love : and factions
 Who oppose spontaneous actions
 Must forgive his master prancing
 And the vigour of his dancing.
 If not deeming it celestial,
 Then of Nature and not bestial.*

JOHN GIBBINS.

THE VALLEY REVISITED.

*'as one who joys
 With an intensity of reverence
 In Nature's dower too keenly to abide
 Her presence with light heart.'*

(GORELL: *The Spirit of Happiness*,
 Book I, ll. 173-176).

*Loved vanished land I knew
 Strangely have you gone.
 Still the old path damp with dew
 Winds on and on.
 Still the well-known hilltops
 Dawn from dark to flame ;
 But like the face of one estranged
 Look no more the same.*

*Early light on scree and brook
 All the past denies,
 And looks, as might a changeling look,
 With new and strange eyes.*

*Something sits beneath the sky,
That was never there ;
Strangeness peers from every curve
The dark hills wear.*

*Never man saw the earth,
Never man the sky ;
Only something more remote,
Formed, he knows not why,
Part of earth, part of light,
Part of his own mind ;—
Edged with cloud, but strangely bright,
And changing like the wind.*

*Here the stream gurgles out
Through moss old and brown ;
There leaps, and with a shout,
Forty feet down ;
Still, where the torrents pass,
The old smooth shape
Hangs there, as cut in glass ;
But the waters 'scape.*

*No man, that fares in time,
May ever turn back.
In space he turns about again ;
Not so in time, alack.
The far, remembered hilltops
Towered only in the brain,
And sank, dissolved, so long ago,
They shall not rise again.*

ANTHONY FFETTYPLACE.

DUPLICITY OF MR. KRANTZ.

BY VIOLET CAMPBELL.

It was always dim, chilly, and at the same time far too hot in Charlot's Studio these wintry days. Even the huge stretch of skylight that faced north bared only either a high plain across which clouds raced, or a dark, heavy canopy almost touching the glass. When it hailed the noise was deafening. When it rained the fierce spears seemed directed individually at the students; foiled by the glass barrier, they distended themselves sullenly, running down in ugly spirals: a hideous aspect of rain, usually mercifully withheld from human eyes.

Within, there was neither grace nor comfort.

The sharply intersecting angles of easels, stools and canvases formed, in the centre, a crowded and too busy pattern, amid tubes, brushes and palettes. On the walls were crammed, haphazard, the works of old students, some framed, some merely pinned up askew—pencil, charcoal or oil: inspired lay-outs, academical drawings, or symbolic designs thrown off in a frenzy long since out-dated.

The only point of dignity and beauty in the Studio focussed itself in the model, a young girl, child almost, who posed dutifully, day after day. Students who argued with passion on the matter of Significant Form in an egg or an onion were agreed without reservation as to the unexampled purity in the lines of the Italian model Carlotta. And not only were her lines perfect, but her colouring was such as to cause every student to grind his teeth, tear

up his canvas, sigh, curse, and despair. For her skin seemed to hold the very quality of sunshine—a rich and subtle gold, flushed even in the shadows with rose and amber, and reflecting light with the transparency of an illumination. A little brazier seemed to burn within her limbs, they were so radiant. This dazzling and mature colour, within the gentle cadence of her form, struck a note at once tender and bizarre, imparting a sense both of promise and of fulfilment, like a sapling bathed in the glow of eternal autumns, seen in the landscapes of Diaz.

Her poses, too, were spontaneous, graceful and sustained. From half-past nine until four o'clock she remained an inspiration for that beauty that is perceived only with the soul: when the bell sounded she quietly slipped on her wrap, descended the dais, dressed, and went home.

The students were a cosmopolitan lot. Swedes, Latins, two or three Americans and a Japanese. They hailed from all classes of society, resembling each other only in a fantastic reverence for their art. It caused no surprise that the pretty Italian student, Lucia, should turn out to be a sister of the model.

The two girls walked home together. They were very poor. A model is lucky to get more than half a crown an hour: and often they both had to live on Carlotta's earnings. To-night, besides, they were tired, hungry and wet from the walk in the rain. So it was without pleasure that they observed that tiresome old Mr. Krantz at their door again. This was the third time in two weeks. On the tide of their entrance he entered, too.

'Just looked in to see if I could interest you,' said Mr. Krantz in his easy way.

'Well, you can't,' said Carlotta rudely. One cannot always be posing.

‘Oh come!’ said Mr. Krantz. ‘You have not heard my proposal. I have just arranged a new system, an *entirely* new system, to cover all risks, *all* risks! For all young people now is the time to take it up; the payments are small, and the mind is secure from anxiety for loss of property, jewels, work, beauty, health—anything. It is the most comprehensive system in the world, this of mine, Albert Krantz. Only yesterday——’

‘We have told you before, Mr. Krantz,’ said Lucia gravely, ‘that it would not be possible for us, in any case, to make any payments. Besides, what have *we* got to insure? What possessions have *we*?’

‘What indeed?’ echoed Carlotta bitterly.

Mr. Krantz regarded the two stiff little figures. ‘Your youth, your innocence, my children,’ he said in his heart. He glanced carefully round the room. There was a pile of canvases near the door. ‘Why not your pictures?’ he said. ‘They must be of value to you. They are your livelihood, You send them from place to place. One day they are lost, stolen, there is a fire. What happens to them, *hein*?’

Both girls appeared quite unconcerned.

‘Or *you*,’ he said, turning to Carlotta. ‘This pretty little face, eh?’ He tilted it under the chin. Carlotta flushed a little. They all knew her one vanity—her skin. ‘One day,’ said Mr. Krantz, ‘one day you grow old, *kaput*, finished!’

The sisters continued to regard him stonily.

Mr. Krantz sighed. ‘No?’ he said. He sunk his head and rubbed his chin dreamily. All at once he seemed to be lost in some world of his own. ‘Your father,’ he murmured, ‘insured his whole stock of pictures with us. Ah, those old days! All his stock, year after year, for twenty years: and was there ever a claim? No, your father was

careful and conscientious. Besides, he had many clients. Nothing stayed on his hands *too long* . . . What am I saying ? Ah, the world is not always perfectly honest——’

At this point both girls began to look at him with distrust. Mr. Krantz pulled himself together. In the pause his glance took in again the wretched poverty of the room. And at once he began to resume, in his easy manner : ‘ Another very special feature of my new system is an arrangement for loans, on extremely favourable terms. Ahem ! Now to you, as daughters of my old friend and client——’

By this time the two sisters were exasperated. Could he not tell when he was not wanted, neither he nor his patter ? Besides, is it not well known that all Jews are avaricious, and not to be trusted ? Once get into their clutches——

So Mr. Krantz was frozen out. He went downstairs, shaking his head sadly. Those two sisters ! Always the same ! So demure, so punctilious, so grown-up and yet so childish : and above all, so devoted to each other ! Common sense, however, appeared to have been denied them.

Within, they gazed at each other anxiously, for approval. ‘ Were we right, Lucia ? ’ asked Carlotta. ‘ Perfectly right, darling,’ said Lucia gravely. ‘ We cannot afford to give Mr. Krantz any money just now. Besides, why need we insure my pictures ? God will look after them better than Mr. Krantz.’

No wonder Lucia spoke with pride and conviction. Two small water-colours had just been accepted by the gallery in Sussex Street, and from this wonderful circumstance great things were expected. Unfortunately, the gallery was charging five shillings each for wall-space ; that meant ten shillings, without frames or transport. Still, they were

bound to sell at the low price on their labels. Who could resist giving five pounds for a delicious dark sweep of trees, beside a pool, with a pale sky, and the moon rising? Or seven-pounds-ten for a young girl in a crimson dress, near a window?

These happy thoughts kept them both elated while Lucia worked each day as long as light lasted. The money from the sale was spent, over and over, in a hundred necessary and pleasant ways. When evening came, however, it was harder to be cheerful. Her work seemed to Lucia's tired eyes meaningless and tawdry. Were her designs becoming less true, her balances clumsier and more uncertain? Carlotta, at any rate, seemed to think so. Her glance betrayed it, though her kind little heart would never have said so. 'One needs sunshine to be able to paint, my sister,' was all she would say, and mingled with her words they would hear the rain on the roof. . . . 'Ah, if we could but return to Italy, you would see, your work would recover. Oh, those blue beautiful skies! Shall we ever see you again?'

Yes, that was their dream. Hopeless, impossible project! As it was, they could hardly pay for their food. Every day their little store grew less, and every day it became more necessary to hear of the sale of Lucia's pictures in Sussex Street.

Of course you could not expect them to sell in the very first week or so. No, that was being foolish. Well, one day God would send the kind patron along, the amateur, the lover of art . . .

But as the winter days grew gloomier Lucia became paler, thinner, more serious, and worked with ever-greater concentration. People noticed her with pity and concern. At last, one morning, the big hearty youth who worked along-

side her, and who had just sold some sketches at Grayson's, could stand it no longer. 'Say, Looch,' he remarked cheerfully (he was an easy-going fellow), 'whatta bouta spotta suppa, kid? To-night, eh?'—'I never eat supper,' replied Lucia coldly, 'I always dine with my invalid grandmother.'

Terribly rude, of course. But could one scream to the world that one was hungry, that one had heard that morning from Sussex Street that the Exhibition was over, that one had sold nothing, that ten shillings was owing, and would one arrange for the removal of the water-colours?

This was a very serious blow. For after paying the ten shillings there would be very little money left. Carlotta's engagement at the Studio would shortly be finished. Nothing more for six weeks. What could tide them over this time? Anxiously they discussed it. Seldom had such a gap faced them before. As for Lucia's present work, it was worthless. They both knew it.

'Well,' said Carlotta slowly, 'there are still your large canvases, your first, your best designs. Perhaps after all it will be possible to send them to the big Exhibition in Manchester. In a little while we may know.' Hope returned to Lucia as she fixed her mind on this prospect. The whole of her being now seemed oriented towards Manchester, the place of their deliverance.

With what a savage joy she fell upon the blue official notice when it arrived!—They could exhibit three pictures at the usual rates, at owner's risk: in view, however, of recent losses through fires, etc., in public galleries, it was recommended that all contributions should be insured . . . frames must be plain gold. . . .

Fires! Risks! Suddenly these words pealed through Lucia's mind like a warning bell. She thought of Mr.

Krantz, and of the night he had called upon her and Carlotta. . . .

And looking at her sister she suddenly noticed something. Carlotta drooped lately. Her child's beauty was fading. These last weeks had been terribly trying. A model's life, in this climate, was killing her. The overheated air all day beside the model's stove: the damp rawness of the evening walk home. If only she could be sent back to Italy, be well, be happy, without cares! Oh money! money! sighed Lucia. Well, it all lay now in those three big pictures, their whole future rested with them. Therefore she must be sensible, take no risks. . . .

Mr. Krantz was not in his office when she called that evening. There was only a ferrety youth, his nephew, Jacob.

'And for what sum do you wish to insure them, madam?' he asked Lucia with a contemptuous amusement. Lucia named a very large one. Jacob's eyebrows shot up. 'They are my best,' said Lucia very earnestly. 'Undoubtedly they will be sold in Manchester. I am only concerned for their safety. In any case,' she added, seeing his look, 'who can judge the value of art? What of Corot, who sold his pictures for a few francs, and now——'

'Yes, yes, of course,' said Jacob, who knew considerably more about Corots, of both kinds, than Lucia did. He could hardly conceal a smile. 'By the way,' he said experimentally, 'I had another young lady visitor a few minutes ago.'

Lucia was startled. 'Of course,' she said, 'this is all quite confidential?'

'Of course.' He continued to appear amused.

'Then that's settled,' said Lucia. She signed the paper and she paid a small sum. She was quite pleased with her

business talent. All the same, for once she did not tell Carlotta.

And then, on the very next day, came another letter from Manchester. The gallery deeply regretted . . . some miscalculation . . . the wall-space already overcrowded . . . unfortunate oversight . . . impossible exhibit her pictures after all, this year.

Lucia almost collapsed. It was the final straw. She felt at her wits' end. She looked across the table and she saw the thin face of her sister. And suddenly she remembered it was Carlotta's last day at the Studio. And at that, Lucia's reserves of hope and good sense seemed to leave her. She felt desperate, as she had never felt before. She felt abandoned. Yet she mustn't break down before Carlotta—Carlotta mustn't know, at least, not to-day. Already the child seemed distraught, as if there was something fearful on her mind, and so delicate that the least thing might finish her off altogether.

She could not bear to see her, later, at the Studio, shrinking and shivering on the model's throne, and finding it difficult now to suppress her cough. Yet after to-day there wouldn't be even that. How would they live? 'You shall get to Italy *somehow*, my darling,' thought Lucia fiercely.

Indeed, during the afternoon it became apparent to everybody that the model was not herself. She looked nervous, she had fits of trembling, she made sudden convulsive movements as if in fear. Her pose, as the Young Diana, eager and up-reaching, was a mockery and absurd: twice her hunting-spear fell awkwardly from her hand. Everyone was glad when the bell went. But at that very moment Carlotta slipped clumsily and swung the spear around: it caught the foot of the oil-stove. The rickety thing tottered,

swayed, and fell with a crash. And then suddenly, in a second, as it seemed, the whole dais was a-swim in lighted oil, running here and there and spreading rapidly : while to everyone's amazement she, stupid girl, instead of flying from the danger, flung herself down on the rug and wrapped it tightly around her, rolling upon the flames as if to crush them out.

But whether this really was an act of stupidity or, on the contrary, a prompt and heroic measure, no one stopped to wonder ; for at that moment, amidst the confusion, the cries, the overturned easels of students, there came billowing in through the door the huge, dense-black masses of smoke that told only too plainly that the whole Studio was on fire.

There is always some person of great common sense present in emergencies. While certain students were feverishly hunting for precious trifles, others rushing about in a panic, others jamming themselves in the doors and passages, this unconsidered individual rang up the Fire Brigade, drew everyone's attention to the perfectly efficient fire-escape, and the fortunately torrential downpour of rain, and remained calmly behind with one of the girl students to assist Carlotta, the model, who had been badly burnt.

How merrily the old Studio blazed ! The whole fabric seemed saturated with oil, paint and turpentine : flames ran up the walls like angry snakes ; eagerly they licked up the sheets of cartridge paper, the stacks of canvases, leaping from one faded sketch to another, lending them, in their death at least, a few moments of energy and brilliance. Long after the refugees had reached the ground, long after the arrival of the ladder and hoses, wisps and trails of smoke told the interested crowds of the fire in Charlot's Studio.

And yet, after all, when it was over, and the last simmer finally extinguished, only one person was found to have been

injured, while nothing of any great value was destroyed. Nothing, that is, that could not eventually be replaced. Fortunately, the fire had chiefly raged in a small room at the back, employed for storing odds and ends, straw and vases, used canvases waiting to be whitened over, or occasionally the works of some student waiting to be packed for an Exhibition.

For all her stoicism Lucia could not restrain her grief over the loss of her beloved masterpieces. 'They were the best,' she said to herself. 'I shall never paint like this again!' But she kept these thoughts from Carlotta, and when she visited her in hospital. Her mind fixed itself in a tender solicitude upon her sister. 'Are you in pain, darling?' she asked.

'Yes, Lucia,' sobbed Carlotta. 'It hurts more than anything more than *anyone* could have guessed. And you know I am spoilt now, too. My skin is all scarred. The spots will never come right.' She wept unrestrainedly.

But in a few days Lucia came with a face transfigured. 'Wonderful, wonderful news!' she began. 'Now you must not get excited and jump about, or you will get hurt. The pictures I sent to Manchester, they have all been sold, even at the prices I put on them. I have the money arrived this morning. I did not bring the paper for you to see, I thought it was safer left locked up. But, Carlotta (now keep still) you are free now, dearest! With so much money you can go home to Italy! No more, my darling, shall you shiver and cough! No more need you ever be as a model! The minute you are well enough——'

Strange to say, Carlotta did not leap with delight at the recital. Instead, she stared, eyes bulging, in the most extraordinary way. 'I, too, Lucia,' she said, 'have news.

kind Mr. Wigham who painted me last year in the Wood Nymphs, he—he has just had a great success in Paris, he—he has sent me some money from—from gratitude. I cannot show you the letter because I—I was so excited, by mistake I tore it up. But I thought, now Lucia can go home, she can paint again as of old, in—in sunshine.’ . . .

Lucia looked calmly and sternly at her sister. Why did Carlotta blush and falter so much? Of course! The poor child had been through a terrible physical shock: that accounted for everything.

This double, unexpected, and incredible good fortune seemed to stun both the sisters. Still, the money was there, in solid cash, enough to set them both upon their feet again. They were delighted. The fire was forgotten. At once they began to make plans.

Some people, of course, grumbled—the Insurance Company, for instance, that handled the buildings of which Charlot’s Studio formed part. The structure was old; not properly cared for; no adequate fire-fighting appliances; carelessness. There are generally grounds for contesting a claim.

But old Mr. Krantz had never been in any doubt about the matter at all. He rubbed his hands with pleasure as he stared, smiling dreamily, at the unceasing rain.

This attitude infuriated Jacob. Jacob had worked hard; he had poked and pried, he had been superlatively ferrety, he had seen, heard and deduced, and at last he had made what he considered to be a very clever discovery. Yet, instead of praise, all he had received from his uncle was a reproof for harbouring unworthy thoughts and a sharp request never to repeat them. *Unworthy thoughts!* That made him laugh! His uncle was a fool. Too old, and a fool. And so those fantastic claims had been paid. An

enormous sum for some rubbishy artist's canvases. . . . An enormous sum for the skin of an artist's model. . . . He could hardly bear to look at the entries in the ledger. He turned to the business before him.

'Those tin shares,' he was saying with disgust, 'if they don't rise, it'll be downright dishonesty !'

'Dishonesty ?' said Mr. Krantz dreamily. 'Oh no. They would never even have thought of it in that light. . . .'

'What I mean is,' said the astonished Jacob, 'even if we sell now, we sell at a sacrifice.'

'Exactly,' said Mr. Krantz happily. 'A sacrifice. That's much more like it. For that's what it was. For both of them. Each giving up the most treasured possession.' . . .

Jacob stared. He scratched his chin. He tried again. 'Then, are we to hang on to the stock ?' he enquired.

Mr. Krantz hardly seemed to have heard. 'Stock ?' he murmured. His face cleared. 'Why, yes. That's the whole point, my boy. The whole of his stock, year after year, for twenty years, and never a claim. Yes, Jacob, I'm not in any doubt about it. Either way. The more I think it over, the more clearly I see it. Yes, I can see it all.'

And indeed he could. More keenly than with the physical sight he beheld the heroic agony of Lucia as she threw the lighted match among the straw and wrappings surrounding her life's dreams : the terror-laden eyes of Carlotta as she flung her body upon the flaming oil. . . .

Mr. Krantz blew his nose fiercely and whipped round to his nephew. He wondered if his mind had been wandering at all.

'After all, what's money *for*, anyway, *hein* ?' demanded Mr. Krantz.

'You're balmy,' thought Jacob, with irritation.

THE LAIRD'S BOOKS :
AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LIBRARY.

BY JAMES FERGUSSON.

WE know a good deal about his life, very little about his mind. He practised at the Scottish Bar from about 1760 till 1774, when he went into Parliament, and perhaps it was this legal training that made him preserve and endorse so carefully the letters he received and the copies of his answers to them. But his own letters are not of the sort that admit the reader into the writer's mind. Their sentences are as beautifully turned as they are neatly written, but the writer's reserve never relaxes.

He kept no diary, either. It is only the account-book which he methodically filled when he performed the Grand Tour between 1756 and 1758 that shows that, as a young man at least, he could be as human as anybody, by the witness of such entries as 'To filling Quin drunk' (that cost about a guinea), 'To seeing a female giant,' and 'To losses at the cursed cards.'

The Grand Tour was at that time the proper way for a gentleman to finish his education. It has gone out of fashion to-day—which is a pity from every point of view ; but then it was a convention. That was why he undertook it. For he was a conventional man. He did all the right things, and did them very well. His elder brother died young, and he found himself, at the age of seventeen, the heir to the family baronetcy and estate. His father and grandfather had followed the law with distinction, so he

followed it too. But it was a crowded profession, and though he was doing well in it, he abandoned it at the age of thirty-two and turned to politics. He spent twenty-two years in Parliament, and was a very industrious and conscientious back-bencher, obedient, like almost every other Scottish member, to the direction of 'the uncrowned king,' Henry Dundas. In the vacations and after his retirement he played an active and useful part in the great campaign of agricultural reform for which the later eighteenth century was notable; and he added to his draining, clearing, enclosing, and sowing, a policy of tree-planting, of which the results to-day bear witness to his taste and judgment. He died a bachelor in 1813, in an atmosphere of universal respect and affection; having, so far as the most earnest research can discover, scarcely made a joke in his life.

It is always interesting, if seldom fruitful, to try to discover a man's likes and dislikes from his books; and the game can be played, given the opportunity, as well with those of a dead man as of a living—though of course the resultant theories can never be fully tested. The laird's library survives to-day with few additions and practically no reductions. It is easy to separate from it the rather ponderous religious and horticultural works added by his nephew, who died in 1838, and the items of the family collection before his time—early Dutch and German editions of Greek and Latin classics, volumes of law treatises and reports and Acts of Parliament, and some formidable examples of seventeenth-century theology. The three thousand or so volumes that remain have an interesting variety. And they show that the laird was not such a dull man after all; that his conversation was probably much livelier than his letters; and that he had culture, discrimination and taste.

He enjoyed the company of men of letters, and they seem

to have enjoyed his. As a young man he was very friendly with George Keate, the *dilettante* poet, and paid several visits to old Edward Young, the author of the once-celebrated *Night Thoughts*, in his rectory at Welwyn. Dr. William Robertson, one of the most famous of the Edinburgh *literati*, on whose style Gibbon was proud to model his own, was another friend of the laird's. Young Robert Fergusson gave him a copy of the little book of poems he published in 1773. Two other eminent men, who may be called rather compilers than writers of books, were his intimate friends: Sir David Dalrymple (afterwards Lord Hailes) and Sir John Sinclair.

He was himself something of a bibliophile. He cared for his books, for the look and the feel of them, and for their preservation. Every book in those days came from the bookseller in paper or boards, and had to be bound if it were not to become dog's-eared and dirty. The laird must have spent a good deal of money on calf leather and gilt tooling. One can almost guess from the richness of certain bindings which books he admired most and considered the greatest acquisitions to his collection.

Nothing so much displays the laird's conventionality, the way in which he belonged absolutely to his period, as his selection of authors for his shelves. Omitting the rows of French and Italian classics which he purchased on the Continent, one can deduce his determination to collect for himself and his heirs all the best authors among his contemporaries. The results of this resolve are a measure of how greatly literary taste can alter in a hundred and fifty years. Here are the works of Pope and Parnell, in the beautiful editions printed at Glasgow by the Foulis brothers; but not Gray, nor Cowper, nor Collins, nor Blake. Johnson's *Journey to the Western Isles* is here, but not Boswell's *Tour to the*

Hebrides, which it is safe to presume the laird considered an improperly frank and informal book, without the dignity and reticence a work of travel should possess. Beattie's languid *Epigoniad* was added to the collection, but not Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*; David Hume's historical but not his philosophical works; Ferguson on the Roman Republic, but not (except for an odd volume) Gibbon on the Roman Empire.

He collected the best contemporary editions of some of the English classics: Pope's Shakespeare, the Foulis printing of *Paradise Lost*, and Birch's edition of *The Faerie Queen*. He did not miss the publication of Clarendon's letters, nor of Johnson's Dictionary. But what is most apparent in the collection of contemporary works is that the laird was a keen believer in Scottish intellect and the Scottish genius. It was characteristic of him that though he failed to secure a copy of the Kilmarnock edition of Burns's poems, in spite of living only fifteen miles from the poet's birthplace, he was among the subscribers to the first Edinburgh one. He bought, and had sumptuously bound, various first editions of Adam Smith, William Robertson, Adam Ferguson, and Lord Kames—not, rather strangely, of Lord Monboddo. With equal eagerness he bought James Macpherson's 'translations' of Ossian and the handsome 1763 quartos of James Thomson's collected poems. He bought also the *Travels in Africa* of Mungo Park; and Alexander Mackenzie, the Canadian explorer, presented him with a copy of his *Voyages*. The *Statistical Account of Scotland*, bound with something approaching splendour, occupies the whole of one shelf, David Hume's various historical works most of another.

History was indeed one of his chief interests, and the history of Scotland holds a proper proportion among his books on this subject. His father's contributions to the

collection show that the taste was hereditary. To them he added *Doomsday Book*, the *State Trials*, Lord Lyttelton's life of Henry II, various works on genealogy and heraldry, the sixteen volumes of Smollett's *History of England*, and the massive folios of Rymer's *Fœdera*, the raw material of any writer on mediæval Britain; as well as Goodall's beautifully printed edition of the *Scotichronicon*, the Carstares *State Papers*, and, in his old age, George Chalmers's exhaustive and fascinating compilation *Caledonia*. This section of his library includes two interesting presentation copies, Lord Hailes's *Annals of Scotland* and the great trilingual edition of Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, the history of the Kings of Norway, which Gerhard Schöning published in 1783. The first of these came from its author, the second from Grimur Jonsson Thorkelin, the famous Icelandic antiquary who was the first man to appreciate and transcribe the *Beowulf* manuscript in the Bodleian Library; he gave the two tall folios to the laird in 1788, with a complimentary Latin inscription and a quotation from Horace on the flyleaf.

It would be tedious to enumerate more titles. There are numbers of treatises and pamphlets on agriculture and the Scottish fisheries—a testimony to his interest in the improvement of his estate and the activities of the British Fishery Society—and there are the law books which he accumulated in his early years. Noteworthy among the latter are a quantity of volumes bearing on two famous cases in which he played a leading part, the Douglas Cause and the Additional Case of the Countess of Sutherland.

Here and there one may find some inscription on a flyleaf or in a margin where the laird found his author at fault; but these are not numerous: the true bibliophile does not disfigure his books by writing in them. The

most interesting of them are an angry correction to the family history as given in Playfair's *Baronetage*, and (far removed both in time and mood) a very youthful drawing scribbled in his grandmother's French dictionary—is it his work or his elder brother's?—and bearing the legend 'Mrs Wilson roaring for her spectacles.'

But the library's omissions are almost as significant as its possessions. The absence of those whom we to-day consider the greatest poets among the laird's contemporaries is not really very surprising, for he did not care for poetry. But one might well wonder why he should have bought some of Boswell's pamphlets on the Douglas Cause and his *Account of Corsica*, but neither the *Tour to the Hebrides* nor, above all, the *Life of Johnson*. The answer peeps out in the life of Boswell himself. He and the laird were acquaintances but not friends. They were in opposition over the Douglas Cause, which set all Scotland arguing, and they were rivals for the county seat in Parliament. Boswell was disappointed more than once in the latter contest and in consequence publicly attacked his successful opponent several times. During a moment of comparative friendliness he introduced his neighbour to Dr. Johnson in London. The interview was not a success: Johnson was calling the laird 'a vile Whig' to his face within three minutes of their acquaintance, and Boswell noted the conversation, with rather more than the usual pro-Johnson bias, and set it forth in his biography of the great man. It is hardly surprising that the laird wished for no more of Boswell's books on his shelves.

Another notable omission is Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. It came out in separate volumes, and the laird bought the first as soon as it appeared and had it worthily bound. Then he read it. He bought neither

the second volume nor any other. Evidently Gibbon's views on Christianity were too much for him.

Perhaps the most striking omission of all, to a modern reader, is that of fiction. There is a fair amount of poetry in the library, but almost the only English novels are the works of Fielding. For the rest, there are some scientific works, a good selection of books of travel, and a well-chosen set of reference books of all kinds. Their owner, it is plain, liked facts. He was a very typical son of his generation, which did so much to increase the sum of human knowledge and which had its feet so firmly planted on solid ground.

East Lothian.

THE VANISHED COCKNEY.

BY C. E. LAWRENCE.

His origins, like those of some other important persons and things, are wropped in mystery, and it cannot be said that the wise in anthropological science or experts in philology have greatly troubled over him. The Cockney—was he so called because, as some assert, he was simpleton enough to believe that cocks laid eggs; or, as others have declared, was merely a cheeky cockerel of a fellow? Chaucer anyhow called him a ‘daf,’ which is the next-door-neighbour to ‘daft.’ And what of Cockayne, that fabulous land of houses built of cakes whence he was supposed to have come? The beginnings of Topsy who merely ‘growed’ could hardly have been less certain. The fact remains that he was—he really and truly was: of that there’s no question—and now it seems that he has vanished, or almost so; one of the many institutions which, like the soldiers of the war-song, not so much died as faded away; a circumstance that deserves at least the tribute of a literary tear.

Not that *he* was lachrymose. On the contrary, he was almost irrepressibly cheery, noisy at times, especially in his jollier moods; democratically familiar in a hail-fellow fashion with all and sundry, and often prone to a smiling impudence; though at other times, possibly after a too-vigorous Bank Holiday, he could be slack, moody, morose, difficult, fitful, suspicious; and in his sudden tempers sometimes dangerously violent. As, also, when doubtful of the company he was in, he could be awkwardly shrewd, and when tongues were pointed, roughly sarcastic.

According to the likeliest account of his origins the Cockney was a person born and resident within the sound or, as others with an equal want of authority declare, a square mile of Bow Church in Cheapside—such square mile being circular. The distance has never been exactly geographical and, in fact, is so elastic that the characteristics of the Cockney may be recognised in citizens of the Metropolis living as far afield from St. Mary-le-Bow as are Stepney, Paddington, Shoreditch, Islington and Vauxhall. The Cockney, however, had always a 'way with him' and was able to carry his own aspect of London with him wheresoever he went. To some degree his accent has settled in Australasia. And now to all intents and purposes he has vanished, with his spryness, cheek and drawl, and the frequent aitchlessness for which he endeavoured occasionally to compensate by replacing the missing aspirates elsewhere.

How was he distinguished; known for what he was? By many characteristics, of course; but especially through his intonations and speech; for from the days when Villikens had his Dinah and Mr. Weller Senior told his Samivel to spell it with a 'we,' the Cockney had managed to preserve his peculiar pronunciation, although over even a short period it was apt to change radically. Yet somehow it remained in its expression as peculiar to him as was any dialect to the persons of the locality it derived from, whether of Scotland, Ireland, Lancashire, Somerset or even the legendary Oxford of modern life. For ten years before the outbreak of the World War, which assuredly helped to banish our friend from his customary walks into the condition of half-forgetfulness that we now deplore, his intonation changed from a slow indistinctness to directness of utterance, and back again; and it would need more than

a normal essay to make clear the progressive modifications which came, for example, even to the monosyllable 'out.' That which at one time was 'hout' had come to be 'art' not long afterwards. There was no stabilisation, even with a monosyllable.

To make things easier let us see how the speech of the Cockney has been set down by certain masterly observers within the last hundred years; and begin with Charles Dickens, for in his time he was the keenest exponent of the Central Londoner and his ways, and he warmly loved the great city with its humanities and oddities. To get the cream of it, we go at once to the heart of Cockneydom as may be visited in his pages; to that very Cheapside where Bow-bells still chime, and where, after 'two years and better' of separation, Sam Weller and his father happened to meet.

"Wy, I'll tell you what, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, senior, with much solemnity in his manner; "there never was a nicer woman as a widder, than that 'ere second wentur o' mine—a sweet creetur she was, Sammy: all I can say on her now is, that as she was such an uncommon pleasant widder, it's a great pity she ever changed her con-dition. She don't act as a vife, Sammy."

That is a taste of the earlier old-time Cockney, though with the aspirates generally in their places and 'such,' not 'sich,' which, one feels, was a verbal touch of the period. It must be truer to type than the ear and pen of Thackeray caught when he was writing down, so laboriously, the confessions of his familiar flunkey, Charles James Harrington Fitzroy Yellowplush.

'As soon as we entered our little wessel, and I'd looked to master's luggitch and mine (mine was rapt up in a very small hankercher), as soon, I say, as we entered our little

wessel, as soon as I saw the waives, black and frothy, like fresh drawn porter, a-dashin against the ribs of our galliant bark, the keal like a wedge, slittin the billoes in two, the sales a-flaffin in the hair, the standard of Hengland floating at the mask-head'

—and so continues. That does not seem true to type. We turn to Mr. George Bernard Shaw who has frequently played with the Cockney's ways of saying it, and did so, especially in *Widower's Houses*, *The New Pygmalion* and *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*. From the third of those comedies we cull a passage out of the talkative mouth of Felix Drinkwater the pirate, formerly of the Waterloo Road, that, with its orthographical acrobatics, appears almost too bad to be true.

'Eah! Wot are you a syin orn? We cawnt gow withaht yer. (To LADY CICELY.) Naow, lidy; it wouldnt be for yr hown good. Yer cawnt hexpect a lot o poor honeddikited men lawk huz to ran ahrseolvs into dineger withaht naow Kepn to teoll us wot to do. Naow, lidy: hoonawted we stend: deevawded we fall. . . . Weoll, lidy: y' cawnt deenaw that e's a Paffick Genlmn. Bit hawbitrairy, preps; but hin a genlmn you looks for sich. It tikes a hawbitrairy wanne to knock aht them eathen Shikes, aw teoll yer.'

The passage that follows appeared in *The Times* of August, 1833, three years, it may be remembered, before Mr. Pickwick and the Wellers first took on immortality. A youth was charged in the police-court with stealing a pair of second-hand trousers from a pawnbroker's shop in Lambeth.

THE PRISONER.—I'se quite hinnocent, your vorship. I was a walking along, and I sees these here trousers a hanging up, vich I vishes I'd a never seed at all, and so I looks at em a dangling about like a chap at the front of the Old

Bailey, when I'm blessed if they didn't all of a sudden drop naturally slap-bang into my harms. I had no intentions whatsomdever in stealing them ere things, not at all.

THE MAGISTRATE.—But it appears you ran some distance with them.

THE PRISONER.—That ere is no sich a thing ; I never runned at all. I seed em come down, as I said before, into my harms. Blessed, your vorship, if ever I seed sich a thing afore.

That, as an example of colloquialism, seems likelier ; though it is widely different from the Cockney lingo, in any of its phases as we have known them, of the last forty years. We have had Empstead, Westminister, garn (for 'go on'), loikely, gorblimey, dyly pyper, farver (for 'father'), abart, wotcher (what cheer !) ; but the *v* for *w*, as formerly mis-used, finally disappeared long ago.

So much for the pronunciation, Cockneyese as she was spoke—or inadequately wrote. But such was not the whole of our Londoner's vocal endeavours, as he had a weakness for singing as he went along, though seldom was it music. Often the evening thoroughfares were hideous with his noise of lungs ; sometimes it was a solo lustily shouted as he wandered ; at other times it was in chorus and preferably to the accompaniment of a cornet or accordion from the box-seat of a brake or charabanc at a 'beanfeast.' Frequently, when the day's work was done, a party of young men, five or six, and one with a concertina, would solemnly stride along the evening pavements and declare with unmelodious unison that 'Little Annie Rooney is my sweetheart !' or other lyrical avowal of amorous devotion that anyhow was sounder in its sentiment, and more tolerable otherwise, than the stuff moaned by the soloists of jazz orchestras about some 'Baby' or 'Honey' or other damsel-deity born in America of negro exaggeration and mental slush.

Generally the songs of the Cockney were the product of the music-halls ; institutions which because they died—to come in these days to a fluttering reappearance—have been made the subjects of a good deal of unjustified regret. Despite their name, little true music came from them ; while the words sung to their tunes as a rule were illiterate, and so little varied were the individual performances, sometimes actually over a period of years, that the repertory of nearly every so-called star of the halls became known to nauseousness by the audiences. There were exceptions, of course, to that level of mediocrity ; and the names of Marie Lloyd, Albert Chevalier, Dan Leno and a few others stand out for good human work and personality ; but the general performance of the ‘ serio-comics ’ and sentimental vocalists who exploited inexpertly their dreary opportunities was drivel. Boredom, beyond anything else, killed the old music-halls. Yet they provided songs for the Cockney to sing, as well as most of the catchwords that he loved to use. Like that other form of Cockney humour, the pun, with which comedians and the Christy Minstrels made havoc until it died—but never from shame—the catch-phrase was the Londoner’s queer delight. It was not only some harmless generality as ‘ What ho, she bumps ! ’ at every apparent opportunity, or ‘ Now we shan’t be long ! ’ ; but often was rudely personal. ‘ Get your hair cut ! ’ or ‘ Where did you get that hat ? ’ were the sort of blunt gibes which must often have hurt the pride of the poorer brother, who by necessity was compelled to ‘ starve the barber ’ or to make his old ‘ tile ’ last for a seventh season.

They were uttered with much the same intention as when, at the fairs held on Blackheath and Mitcham, and in the happy Cockney’s Bank Holiday revels on Hampstead Heath, between the swings and the roundabouts, he bought

and used squirts, 'ticklers' and 'teasers,' playfully tormenting his playful tormentors with squirted water and intrusive feathers. In his holiday hours the Cockney certainly was crude; a child who had 'growed' without quite growing-up, and sometimes was mischievous, as well as noisy, in his horseplay; and when the drink was in him, as was easy when ale was threepence a pint, inclined to a little confused fisticuffs and taunts only in their purposes Homeric. He was a willing fighter. At any call to a war he promptly enlisted and far too easily died, as the Boer campaign illustrated too well; for rarely was his stamina equal to the ordeals that his brave heart welcomed. But was his form of play really cruder, even at a Bank Holiday level when he had changed hats with his 'donah' and was readiest for knockabout fun, than that of certain pretentious idlers of later days? Possibly, yes; though it is difficult to make comparisons, and assuredly the gate-crashing pleasure-seekers of yesterday had not his justification of long monotonous hours of work in factories and shops, in driving carts or tending barrows—his ill-paid occupation for months and years under a rarely relieved strain.

Not too soon should we depart from the Cockney's stage delights or representations, for the conditions have altered so strangely. In every London melodrama and pantomime, whether at Drury Lane, the Adelphi, the Princess's, the Olympic or the Surrey, as well as at Astley's and Hengler's circuses, for those were rich and inexpensive days of entertainment in England, he was the best part of the low comedian, who proved as essential to the show as the much-wronged hero in his limelit attitudes or the 'principal boy' of a pantomime. The luscious humours of the comic pieman, policeman or publican and of the Dame Trot or Widow Twankey of the Christmas holiday-time,

were the appropriate foil to the mouthy machinations of the villain or to the demon of discord who made his appearance with a glow of red fire and a spring—slapbang !—through a sudden trap-door. What would they have been, those thrills and spells of anguish or spangled glory, without the beaming domestic red-nosed humour of the comedian ? And always, whatever his guise, he was Cockney. Even the stage Irishman or the yokel with theatrical hayseed in his wig was a Londoner detected the moment his japes were out. The brogue or the rural twang were merely trimmings. But the world altogether was simpler then.

Modern audiences, it is said, would not accept the sort of humour or sentiment which sent theatre-going Victorians into roars of mirth or to a shamed silence of enjoyable tears. Possibly that is so—and so much the worse for us ! Though I doubt if it really is so ; for many of the stage jokes of this day are our old, dear old, very old friends of Victorian days faded or freshly furbished-up it may be with a touch of lip-stick. We seem to have lost heartiness and some gift of illusion, as well as the sincerity that was worth its weight in phantom gold ; and for those reasons the living stage has failed to hold the mass of recreation-seekers. The Cockney was essential to the theatre of his days and without him—largely for want of him to set the groundlings in a roar—the playhouse has degenerated into a gilded, pretentious gallantry-show with grey shadows meandering on a screen. Not one film-star of this generation could touch the stock-actors of the old ‘legitimate’ for holding a situation or ‘getting it across.’ In other words, the lapse of the Theatre in open-hearted popularity has generally synchronised with the passing of the Cockney, whose return now, alas, is impossible.

It all was very simple, and that is the whole truth of it.

His *naïveté* was absolute, the more so because of his innocent assumption of knowingness. He walked the world as if he owned it—but then an important part of the world *was* his. And he dressed to the heights of his modest pretensions. His aspiring brother, who was Something in the City (and that was a phrase of Victorian humour !), went daily to his office or counter stool, clad in the tall silk hat and formal frock-coat, though both were apt to be a little faded, of a self-conscious and seemingly prosperous respectability ; and always, even in the passages of life less rigorously circumscribed, the Cockney's going-out clothing was faithful to the fashions of his class—the large-brimmed bowler and black bell-bottomed trousers for a long time being the mark of the Young Man in the Street. Nor must we forget the costers, who also were Cockneys and proud of it. For although the 'pearlies' are sometimes seen, 'Arry and his 'Arriet with her feathers and fringes have all but disappeared. Thirty years ago, as Phil May has recorded, they were prominent and with their concertinas, cellar-flap dances and moke often assertive ; but now they appear to sidle along as it were with apology, as phantomlike as the American Indian who has suffered civilisation and been slain by influences more sinister than tomahawk and gun.

The Cockney was often a figure of fun, and he knew it. He was inclined to play up to his individuality and looked to find his jollity enjoyed. He would chaff hoping to find his mirth returned fairly, and when it wasn't paid back to him could lose his temper suddenly and hotly, especially when he was out of doors. He had a great, crude enjoyment of the streets. They were his principal playground, as still was possible when traffic in the most crowded thoroughfares was rarely more than jogtrot and, except that

drivers were required to keep to the left, there were no regulations to speak of. The motor was still only a half-expectation or a doubtful experiment. In the beginning he laughed at it. It is no laughing matter now.

The streets interested him. The shop-windows then were perhaps more entertaining, if not more alluring, than now because they had less uniformity in tins about them ; and there was scope for Messrs. Kipps and Polly to prove their individual aptitudes in the arts of dressing them. Of all the shop-windows that he made his picture-galleries and books, that of a bird-shop, such as Private Ortheris kept in the Tottenham Court Road, was the most fascinating. The Cockney loved live-stock, even when it was depressed in piles of untidy cages ; but he knew strangely little about it, for with the exceptions of the sparrows and pigeons that shared the fallen contents of nose-bags on the ranks, he saw few birds other than the occasional skylark in its small wire-barred prison nailed beside the bedroom-window and singing for a pity unthought of, or the thrush or black-bird in the basket-cage hung out of cat's range by certain back-doors. Monkeys, whether for sale or squatting on the shoulder of the Italian organ-grinder, were among his favourite clowns. At once inevitably they brought his amused laughter. Dogs he generally tolerated, but cats he disliked, for the reason of course that he did not understand them.

His pursuit of Nature was hazardous, as his holidays were few. When he did venture into the country it was generally to discover boredom. At night-time, especially, he found it ghastly. He hated the silence and longed for lamps, lamps, lamps, street-lamps. ' Light, more light ! ' he would cry, but some good way after Goethe. He was fearful of undomesticated insects, especially wasps and beetles, as well

as of rural smells. The scent of a hayfield or a lime-tree in blossom he would sniff wonderingly for its novelty ; but no smell to him was nearly as sweet as the warmth of a Saturday night in the New Cut or in Leather Lane, where it is possible that a few Cockneys still may be discovered by observant ears. As for the honest smells of the working-day country-side, he disliked them as utterly as Swift did that of Mankind after he had found what he thought was perfection among the Houyhnhnms. But he enjoyed ordered gardens and in the Parks was glad at times to stroll, one of the crowd circling the band-stand though not bothering much about the music ; while he loved a trip down the Thames in a penny-steamboat, to Greenwich or, on the longer excursions, to Rosherville, where he could dance, take tea and devour shrimps, whelks and winkles to his heart's content. As he could pigs'-trotters and stewed eels after his return home, from barrows lit by colza-flares in odd byways and near many of the cheaper theatres. ' Cry to it, nuncle, as the Cockney did to the eels when she put 'em i' the paste alive.' So Lear's heroic Fool immortalised a very long-established delight.

In most of the Cockney's own particular districts there were periodic fair-grounds, where he could shoot at bottles, throw rings competitively about alluring flasks of home-made eau-de-Cologne, play innocent roulette for slabs of yellow sweet-stuff, endeavour to knock down cokernuts—' roll, bowl or pitch,' try his strength with huge hammers, and pretend to be Fred Archer on one of the wooden horses of a roundabout. The jolliest of his entertainments out of doors came from the nigger-minstrels with their banjos, clacking bones and fashionably scarlet lips, singing choruses or sentimental ditties for coppers harvested in a tambourine, and Punch and Judy ; whilst of individual claimants to his

interest and odd coins there were the talkative vendor of cheap umbrellas or tortoisés and the pavement-artist with coloured chalks discovering mountainous landscapes, ships dangerously at sea amid hurricane-waves and lightning-flashes, and slices of fish so pinkly realistic as almost to be human food. The pavement-artist still is with us, though his sincerities have been encroached on by rivals who bring with them and carry away for use on the morrow bad framed pictures which they prop against a wall. It isn't fair play. The public-house, however, brought to the Cockney his crowning delight, with its sociable company and familiar talk that was vastly the better for the presence of the portly landlord's blonde and more than beauteous lady presiding at the bar. Shove-ha'penny rather than darts was then the sportive recreation; with skittles or quoits played in shirt-sleeves when garden-space and the hours of light permitted.

Another aspect of the Cockney's humours was shown in the cheap publications that were printed about him. Where have *they* gone, the old familiar penny comic-papers—*Scraps*, *Fun*, *Moonshine*, *Judy* and *Pick-Me-Up*? The prince of them all to the popular mind was *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday*, especially in its earlier days when C. H. Ross was the editor and W. G. Baxter the artist of its topical front page, exploiting fictitious characters who were as actual then to the public eye as Mr. Gladstone himself—Sloper with his bashed Micawber hat, bulging gamp and bottle of 'unsweetened,' the Dook Snook, Lord Bob, the Honourable Bill, Tootsie Sloper and her Ma, Lardy Longsox, Cousin Evelina and Cousin Evelina's Aunt Higgins—all vulgar, but yet amusing, pleasant and acceptable to the Cockney in his hours of ease. Gin, the red, red nose, the 'masher's' monocle, landladies and their subdued husbands, brokers'-

men, tramps and lodgers, sausages, tripe and kippers, policemen and the sham evangelist, that unprosperous brother of Stiggins and Chadband ; all touched his ironies and encouraged his noisy mirth. The Cockney's humours, as his thoughts, though bountiful, were generally limited to his own brick-bound everyday environment of streets and shops and the kindly common things that occupied those places. Vulgarly is, of course, no virtue, as Mr. Ruskin eloquently and rather expressively pointed out in *Sesame and Lilies* ; but the vulgarity of the Cockney was not of the callous kind that was condemned by the gentle Victorian. It was really high spirits, not always under control ; a result of heartiness and such want of thought as should be tolerated in the limited play-time of hard-worked, honest and ordinary people. Moreover, on the whole it was kindly. No one was keener than the Cockney to help a comrade or a cause that had sincerity of purpose behind it—his hard-earned pennies went plentifully with the pounds—and that truth in the scales of justice will assuredly outweigh such small weaknesses, follies, foibles and peccadilloes as pointed or blurred—or improved—his eager humanity.

It would, however, be a mistake to regard him as altogether cheery. At times he had his glooms, his sulks and moods of jealousy, bitterness and jaundice. Funerals he almost enjoyed, they made him so miserable ; and he faithfully played up to their sombre requirements. At their worst, or best, they were outings. Family reunions. Events, harrowing, melancholy and sentimental, with liquid sociabilities attached. No mourners were more blackly, if dingily, robed than he and his when they could afford it, and alas !—more often than not when they couldn't. Those funerals, indeed, as memory recalls them, were dreadful ;

black, materialistic, unimaginative ; but our hero went through them duteously to the last drink.

His earnestness was also shown on occasions in his politics. Not often was he really attentive to that peculiar interest—headlines were fewer then—and rarely, if ever, did he read anything about it, whether in the evening *Echo* or in his *Lloyd's* on Sundays ; and never before the appeals of the police-news and the sports with the spicy divorce-bits about the naughtier celebrities—the ‘ Nobs ’—were gratified ; for he regarded Society with commingled admiration, contempt and awe, and was extraordinarily interested in the persons and doings of the Royal Family. Queen Victoria held him under a spell, sometimes of awe ; at other times it ended with a sniff. But when his practical sympathy or his suspicions that old England was not getting fair play or giving it to others were roused, he would grow hotly indignant and ask all manner of unruly Whys. One thing was certain : he was inevitably on the side of the underdog, and would hoot, boo, hate anyone who with clear reason was accused of selfish or shady practices. With his emotions so responsive it was not difficult for the unscrupulous sometimes to exploit him ; and at times there came to be unseemly demonstrations, with riots and struggles in the streets. Rights that have since been granted were stupidly denied him ; while the conditions for the multitude often were very hard. With scarcities of food and clothing, shoeless and stockingless children in their rags being often seen shivering in the gutters, there was cause for angry protests. This, however, is not a study of the more sombre conditions of the Victorian Age, but an appreciation of the ways in which the Cockney responded to the calls of those in want ; and that eager sympathy was due to his living among crowded streets with his eyes alert and near the heart of

the world, whereby his spiritual horizons were widened and his own heart was kept warm to the needs of his fellows.

But now he is vanished and, with all his simple vulgarities and the courage which rarely accepted defeat, we ill can spare him. What is the reason for his disappearance? Briefly, it is that his London also has vanished, being out-built and over-built, dispersed into spreading, often characterless suburbs. It has lost individuality, whereby its inhabitants also have lost their opportunity for developing the characteristics which had made them notable and amusing. Thoroughfares wherein the Cockney flourished are empty at night-time, dim lines of business premises traversed only by ghosts, policemen and cats, or, like Mrs. Gamp's Kingsgate Street, pulled down, absorbed into some highway of roaring almighty vehicles. Displaced, the Cockney went by the new tubes and the motor-omnibuses to Walthamstow, Ealing, Acton, and other builded wildernesses, which only a few short years ago, as it seems to the older of us, were fields occupied by browsing cattle and Saturday cricketers.

That is how and why he has gone and it is a sufficient reason for this loving tribute, this literary tear. He was something of London's soul.

M. THE CURÉ'S PREFERMENT.

BY LUCIA M. COOKE.

THE Curé of Delmont was an old man, who had lived at least thirty years in his present *cure* ; one of those country *cures* scattered over the land to refute atheism and preserve the sweet savour of religion ; those *cures*, full of naïve and devout souls, which the angels, undoubtedly, choose for their landing-stage as they plane down from Heaven on their missions of mercy, and from which they take-off again on the return journey (celestial aerodromes, *bien entendu*) when their errand is accomplished.

The good Curé had never received preferment. At one time it would have seemed inevitable. He had been foremost among the seminarists at San Sulpice in his day, and his teachers had predicted he would go far, but he had never gone farther than his present *cure*. The truth is, that the good Curé had, early in life, renounced all ambition and only desired to serve God as simply as possible, allowing himself no indulgences and taking as his aim in life the law of renunciation and the joy of sacrifice. These are no aids to advancement in life, though they may undoubtedly have helped this servant of God to exceed the age-limit laid down for him in Scripture.

His longevity, however, was not entirely due to the simple and devout life he was accustomed to lead, but also, in part, to his housekeeper, Françoise. This excellent woman practised the culinary art to perfection, possessing the gift the *bon Dieu* so often sees fit to bestow on the women of her country. Once, long ago, the Bishop's Chaplain had

dined with the Curé and had commented on the excellence of the *fricassée* and *ragoût* with which he had been regaled. 'You are well placed, *mon vieux*, your *gouvernante* is a *cordons bleu*,' he had said, and was of the opinion that such an adept in the art should be translated to the Palace, being wasted on a humble Presbytery.

The good Curé had taken the alarm. He never knew what he was eating, but he felt that his simplicity had not been quite so simple as he had believed it to be. He remembered the good St. Aldobar, who, when a pheasant was served up at his board, looked upon it as a direct temptation of the Evil One, and did not rest until by prayer and exorcism he had caused the bird to fly roasted away. He knew himself unequal to such feats, but he spoke of the matter to Françoise, and refused to partake of any of the more elaborate dishes, not realising that the simplest *plat* coming from her hands was in itself a *chef d'œuvre*; for even the *soupe maigre* on Fridays and the trout *à la meunière* on Days of Obligation would have pleased an epicure and delighted a gourmet. It was not likely, however, that Françoise would consent to hide her talent in a napkin, and 'Monsieur the Curé' had little chance of receiving Spartan fare at her hands. 'It costs nothing,' she would say with truth. Offerings in kind flowed in at her little back-door, and if they showed signs of slackening, Françoise knew how to spur them on. She was a power in the land, and it was as well to keep in with one who lived so close to the mysteries of the *Au-delà*. A fat duck, or a capon, or a bottle of wine marked the gratitude of many for church benefits received and services rendered in the shape of baptisms, weddings or funerals. Those who had nothing to bring collected wild berries and mushrooms or snared a hare or two. All was fish that came to her net, and the Curé lived

all unknowingly on the fat of the land, a sin the Recording Angel could hardly have laid to his charge.

But there was one matter over which Françoise had no jurisdiction, and that was her master's clothing. She might rule over the inner man, but the outer man defied her. The rusty *soutane* might cry aloud to heaven for renewal, and the hat, green with age and the weather, might be fit only to scare the crows, but the Curé would allow no change to be made. 'They will last my time,' he was in the habit of saying. A high wind had twice carried away the offending hat, but it had been quickly recovered; everyone knew the Curé's hat, it was the only religious hat in the place and was almost as much a symbol of religion as the Church itself.

It was a sore trial to Françoise, but she consoled herself with the belief, universally held, that all those who serve in Presbyteries go direct to heaven.

But there was one spot where it would seem the temptations of the flesh were less liable to penetrate—the Curé's little garden. The garden lay on the sunny side of the Presbytery, a sheltered and retired spot, where he had planted fruit trees, vegetables and pot-herbs, but no flowers, except for a few periwinkles dear to Rousseau, for he feared beauty even in Nature. And here away from all distractions, among his cabbage-plots, he read his breviary and daily meditated on the inestimable benefits of Christianity.

During the last summer of his life the little garden became haunted by a magpie. A dove featuring the Holy Ghost might have seemed more *convenable*, or the sparrow once sold for a farthing—or the cock that crowed thrice in apostolic warning—all these birds having the warrant of Holy Scripture; but a magpie?—a bird of no reputation!—not even mentioned in the sacred Volume!

At first, it was to be feared that the bird might prove an obstacle in the good Curé's path to perfection, and even impede his progress heavenwards. Instead reserving silence during the canonical readings, he would pluck at the priest's cassock until, distracted by the foolish bird, he would pause as often as twelve times in the hour to observe the antics of this pert and lively creature—he who in former days had never so much as lifted his eyes from the page until he had finished, in its entirety, the Office for the Day.

But to every garden its danger ! If Eden, the Perfect Garden, had its snake, we must allow the Curé's garden at least its magpie. The bird visited the garden daily and soon made good his footing there, the Curé aiding, in spite of all Françoise's efforts to expel him.

'See, he belongs to the Dominican Order, he wears the black and white habit,' said the Curé, pleased with his small visitor.

'A thieving, chattering magpie ! Hark at him now !' said Françoise as the bird scolded away at her with evident dislike.

'The Dominicans were always great preachers !' said the Curé with a quizzical smile.

'He imposes himself on Monsieur the Curé. A mischievous bird full of knavery and deceit,' objected Françoise.

'Doubtless he has come to make his confession. Discourage no penitents, Françoise !' said the Curé, in the tone of gentle raillery he often permitted himself to adopt in addressing his old servant. 'We must remember,' he added, 'that a great man once called the Angels the birds of God.'

'An Angel ? that one ?' said Françoise, 'a fallen angel trying to recover his lost soul ! But he shall steal no souls

here, or spoons either !' and the careful woman retired to her kitchen to put away small objects likely to prove tempting to feathered burglars.

But the magpie had no such brigandage in view. He would not have stolen a button. His morals were being strangely influenced by his daily intercourse with the good Curé. Even when he visited the Bishop's Palace on the hill ten leagues off, he had no desire to annex any of the rich trifles he saw lying about there. Even the Bishop's ring, a sapphire as blue as the robe of the Madonna, could not rouse his old sense of acquisitiveness.

The Bishop was a very different man from his friend the humble Curé of Delmont—a *bon vivant*, a collector of rare curios, a man of the world. He was, also, portly in person and disposed to gout. The ring he wore on his first finger denoted his spiritual authority, though the question might arise as to why he and not the Curé should wear it, seeing that even a bird could tell which was the better man. Did the bird actually make the comparison ? This we can never know, for since the days of the Roman augurs—the first to assert the influence of birds on men's lives—no one has really studied the matter. Civilisation has, certainly, failed us in this direction.

One fact, however, may be inferred from the action of this bird in seeking the company of the Curé rather than that of the Bishop, which is, that birds are no respecters of persons ; though this cannot be established with certainty owing to want of statistics, any more than the fact that the magpie disliked feminine influence at the Presbytery can prove, by one example alone, that birds are misogynists. These questions must be left to future augurs to settle.

One day, his religious exercises over, the good Curé reposed himself on the bench in the sun and the bird, perching

on the currant bushes opposite, chattered volubly to make up for his self-imposed silence. Françoise, on her way to the salad-bed, paused to exclaim—‘There is that impudent bird again ! He is preaching to Monsieur the Curé himself—all heresies, I’ll be bound.’

‘What do you say to that, Monsieur Renan ? Sow no heresies in my *paroisse*, I pray you !’ said the Curé with a whimsical smile.

‘I should sprinkle him with holy water, your Reverence !’ said Françoise, not because she understood the allusion to Renan, but because she looked upon all magpies, ravens and crows as birds of ill omen.

‘But Monsieur Renan does not believe in holy water,’ said the Curé ; and Françoise continued on her way to the lettuce-bed, murmuring to herself that ‘Monsieur the Curé had certainly arrived at the childhood of the second.’ Being her Father Confessor she could not tell him of her opinion ; but, warned by a parallel example, we are already aware that hero-worship is not so common a thing in the world as it might be and that even a Curé is not always a hero to his *femme de chambre*.

From that day it pleased the good Curé to liken the bird in its half-clerical dress to the greatest literary sceptic in France. He would address him with a touch of Gallic humour : ‘I begin to have hopes of you, Monsieur Renan !’ he would say. ‘We may yet agree on the inspiration of the Gospels.’ Or he would express a hope that ‘the time may yet come when I may prove to you the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.’ But at this formidable word, so fraught with dogma, the bird would become uneasy and even take to flight. There were others besides Françoise who might have said the good Curé ‘had arrived at the childhood of the second.’

One day, the Curé reproached his old servant for her lack of sympathy with the birds.

'Your name, though altered to fit the female sex, is the same as that borne by the holy St. François d'Assise, who was a great lover of birds ; an example you might do well to follow, being that of your Patron Saint, my good Françoise.'

'I? What should I have to do with idle wandering birds, your Reverence? The Saints may do as they please, but for me—no! It is a life not *pratique*, that of the good St. François. And as for the name, never, never would I have chosen it for myself, *jamais de ma vie!*'

'Then if a miracle had been possible and you had been permitted to speak at your own baptism, what name would you have chosen out of the Calendar of the Saints?' asked the Curé, smiling at her simplicity.

'*Assurément*, I would have desired to name myself after the good Sainte Marthe. Ah! what a woman! What a *menagère!*' and Françoise, who knew a good housewife when she saw one, clasped her hands in pious admiration. Then following out the same train of thought, she continued: 'If the Seigneur Himself came to sup with us to-night in this Presbytery of ours, I, even I, would serve Him, unaided, like the good Sainte Marthe.'

'Bread and wine is all we should need for our Supper with Him, my daughter!' said the good priest, his words a gentle rebuke to the frank materialism of his old servant.

But Françoise would never sit at anyone's feet: she knew which was the better part, and full of service she quickly departed to make an *omelette aux fines herbes* for her master, such as even the Martha of Scripture could never have emulated.

It was evident that the harmony of the little garden was

most complete when the Curé and the bird had it to themselves. The bird was now a reformed character, walking sedately, wings neatly folded, behind the Curé, up and down the little flagged pathway, emitting throaty sounds at intervals, where response seemed necessary during the course of the good priest's devotions. The Curé became at last so accustomed to his presence that he missed his feathered companion when he was absent, and time and again he would take his eyes off his book looking for him.

'Monsieur Renan ! Monsieur Renan !' he would call. 'Come back and let us resume our debate on theology !' and the bird, with a flirt of his tail, would alight at his feet, and putting his shrewd head on one side would assume the air of one who is quite sure he will get the best of the argument.

In this singular way, the bird helped to lighten the burden of old age now weighing upon the shoulders of this aged Man of God, and afforded him, to his great comfort, a last exercise for his kindly sense of humour. But the bond between the Curé and the bird was shortly to be broken.

One day, a wind coming round the corner of the Presbytery entered the little garden and smote the ancient Servant of God in the chest. It was no accident, be it understood. By such means as these does the Last Summons come, disguised maybe in a gust of wind, or even in a draught. The Curé took to his bed in the attic-chamber, but no *tisanes* or *cataplasmes* were of any avail, so thoroughly had the wind delivered the message calling the good priest home. 'The will of God is in the wind !' as they say in Provence.

The magpie missed his master from the garden and did not rest till, looking through the attic window, he discovered him stretched out on his pallet-bed in a room bare of all ornament but the Symbol of Redemption hanging above his head. Later on, the bird watched the bearers

carry him across to the Church and place the coffin, half-open, in the chancel before the altar, so that the peasants filing by might take their last look at their late Father in God. Many had brought flowers and wreaths, and someone had laid a Crucifix on his breast. The bird wondered what he could do. Then spreading his wings, he flew direct to the Bishop's Palace on the hill, where on his arrival he found to his surprise that no one seemed to know that the good Curé was dead. He wandered about the place, prying into every corner, and at length, finding a window open, he entered the Bishop's Parlour. The Bishop himself lay asleep in his chair with folded hands; and on the table by his side lay the episcopal ring, placed there to relieve His Eminence's gouty finger, being weighty. In a moment, the bird had seized the episcopal ring in his strong beak and departed as silently as he had come.

Arriving back at the Church, he entered by the Sacristy window, and finding no one there, he perched himself lightly on the edge of the coffin. The candles round the bier somewhat confused him at first, but the courageous bird went on with his task. Bending over, he began with gentle pecks to remove the sheet sufficient for his purpose, and by dint of much perseverance, he at last succeeded in placing the ring in the desired position. The sapphire gleamed for a moment in the darkness like a ray from heaven; then the bird let the sheet fall back into its place and departed, just as the men came in to close down the lid, and the watchers arrived to take up their vigil for the night.

There was a hue and cry in the Palace on the hill and much searching high and low for the lost jewel. It was no common jewel and had been kissed by hundreds of the Faithful, following the ceremonial usage of the Church. The Bishop looked at his bare hand with sorrow and dismay. With

the absence of the ring, he seemed to have lost half his power and dignity, so strong a hold does a symbol sometimes acquire over the mind. In the end he was forced to borrow an unworthy substitute to cover his loss, since it would have been without precedent to have offered the Faithful an unringed hand to kiss.

The mystery of the loss was never solved. Only the magpie knew that the Bishop's ring had gone to Heaven on the finger of the humble Curé of Delmont.

DEAD LOVE.

*To-day I passed forgotten graves,
And stumbling over sunken stone,
Saw, where the grasses hushed their waves,
Her lovely name that gleamed alone.*

*O in what beauty she was dressed,
What scarves of joy were round her thrown,
Yet over her the years have pressed,
And now she lies alone, alone.*

*I had forgotten she lived or died,
Forgotten the grief that was my own,
Her loveliness I had denied
And closed her grave with weeds and stone.*

*Bereft of her, my memory
Had stamped the sod and nettles strown,
Nor knew nor dreamed that I, not she,
Lay in that grave, alone, alone.*

M. NEWTON.

·FATHER FLEMING AND POPE LEO THE THIRTEENTH.

BY MRS. WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

ONE of the great pleasures that awaited us in Rome, when we arrived there in the early spring of 1902, on our way back from Australia, was meeting Father Fleming. He was not only at the head of the Franciscan Order, but one of the members of Pope Leo XIII's inner counsel. He carried on his broad shoulders a great weight of world-wide anxieties, but he was well able to bear them. He was full of life and of interest in all that was going on. Of course, Ireland had the first place in his heart as in my husband's. The two men had endless talks. They would spend hours in our sitting-room at the Minerva discussing Irish affairs. The Franciscan explained a great many things in past events connected with the Plan of Campaign, where there had been misunderstandings, and English politicians had made a great deal of mischief. They had been found out. A great change had been brought about.

I enjoyed listening to those conversations about Ireland in the past, the present and the future. There were also glimpses of the great affairs of the world of men, of science and of literature. Father Fleming explained so much that had seemed obscure. To listen to him was like looking into a clear flowing stream : one saw so much at the bottom.

In our wanderings through Rome what we perhaps preferred were our long stations at St. Peter's. We never seemed to have seen enough. One evening Father Fleming sent us cards for the Pope's Mass next morning. I was not

provided with the black dress ladies had to wear. All the shops were shut. I asked the advice of the chambermaid. She smiled and said she would very soon get me a dress. She brought me within an incredibly short time a black dress that fitted me. It was very plain and very long: It had a vague nun-like appearance that charmed me. I asked how much I was to pay.

My surprise was great when I was told 5 lire (4s. in those days). I had never had such a bargain, not even in Ballaghaderreen, where Mrs. Deane gave me goods at cost price. A friend lent me a black lace veil.

At St. Peter's one of the greatest emotions of our lives awaited us. My husband described the scene in *Irish Fireside Hours*.

For the next two days I wore my black dress. It had the drawback of being long in those days of long dresses and required a great deal of brushing. On the third day the chambermaid politely suggested that it was time to give back the dress. I had only had it on hire. I hurried to give the dress a thorough brushing. To make up for my comical disappointment, I ordered a black dress at a dressmaker's. According to my French training, no respectable woman should be without a black frock.

A few weeks later Father Fleming announced to us that we would receive cards for a private interview with the Pope. We had never dreamt of such a favour. My husband was afraid that old political differences might make it advisable to keep away. Father Fleming declared that all that had passed away, and that many facts that were obscure in the old days had been cleared up.

I had somehow hoped that Father Fleming would be present at the audience, but we were alone when we were introduced to the Pope.

As we drew near to the Holy Father, his face looked ivory-like, it seemed scarcely that of a living being. Once the eyes turned on us, they made a wonderful impression on me. They were all alive and full of such kindness as one rarely sees in the world. We knelt together. My husband spoke French, so did the Pope, who kept my hand in his through the interview. His first words to my husband were: 'You have been a good fighter.' The Pope's gesture, as he raised his arm, added to the weight of the words, that it was only by struggling one could achieve anything in the world. My husband said he was bringing the homage not only of Catholic Ireland, but of Irish Catholics in England, America, Australia and all the world over.

'Yes, yours is a scattered race,' was the reply. 'Only yesterday I had the visit of an Irish ecclesiastic, Cardinal Moran, an Australian Archbishop, who was Bishop of Ossory in Ireland.'

After the interview, my husband marvelled at the Pope's wonderful memory, to recollect the very diocese the Cardinal had left to go to Australia.

Pope Leo made on me very much the impression that Cardinal Manning had made: of a spirit very near escaping from his bodily envelope. The spiritual life burned brightly in those eyes, that saw very far in the other world, things hidden to ordinary human sight.

After our visit to the Pope we called, according to custom, on Cardinal Rampolla. He was a great churchman and man of the world. He spoke of Ireland and questioned my husband as to high Irish ecclesiastics. As to one of them, my husband replied that he could not well express an opinion of Cardinal Logue, as they did not see eye to eye in political matters. The Italian's reply was eloquent in its brevity: '*un prêtre respectable.*'

Then my husband burst out in his expression of enthusiasm for Dr. Croke as the greatest Irish Churchman of his generation. Cardinal Rampolla's face had a curious expression, but he did not express any dissent.

Easter was coming near. Father Fleming brought me a present from a convent, a beautiful palm, such as I never saw before. It was a work of art. I said I would go and thank the nuns. Father Fleming gave me the address. It was the only convent I ever visited where there was not one Irish nun ; as a rule there were several. No sister understood any language but Italian. I was woefully ignorant. My attempts at explaining failed, until I spoke of Father Fleming. His name helped to clear the mystery. The chaplain came on the scene and was my interpreter.

Everyone was agreed that had Pope Leo lived, Father Fleming would have become a Cardinal. With a new Pope there was a change. Father Fleming left Rome, and lost his position of influence.

A few years later we met him at Killarney, where he was living in the Franciscan Monastery. He spent the evening with us and we were grieved to notice that his health was failing, pluckily though he was trying to hide it. He died a few months later. The recollection of his kindness in those happy days in Rome, in the bright spring of 1902, warms my heart as I sit, recalling the past.

THE MONKEY.

BY HORACE THOROGOOD.

WHEN the man with the monkey appeared, he was instantly the chief attraction in that part of the market. The pavements were crowded with country folk from the surrounding Essex villages that bear such pastorally-poetic names as Magdalen Laver, Ivy Chimneys, Theydon Bois, Stapleford Tawney and Abbess Roding, and the stalls that offered all kinds of domestic requirements, at nimbler prices than those of the shops under whose noses they stood, were doing a brisk business.

A clarion-voiced young man in his shirt-sleeves, perched on his barrow, was selling crescent bunches of bananas—three dozen for 1s. 2d.—at high speed. There were kippers at 3d. a pair and mackerel at 1d. each. Silk stockings at 1s. a pair magnetised all the young women, and the older ones mentally measured their sons for the cheap flannel trousers. Great arrays of tinned groceries, leather strips and rubber heels for home boot-repairing, and a glittering spread of beads and cheap jewellery kept the small change passing rapidly. The proximity of the cattle pens supplied to all this petty trading the noise and smell of big business.

But as soon as the monkey was seen squatting on its master's shoulders, wearing a red woollen cape with hood attached to keep it warm in the chilly weather, the salesmen lost their customers. 'There's the monkey!' mothers cried to their children, and soon the congestion was increased by a congregation of perambulators from which wide-eyed babies stared at the little brown sprite.

It was a tiny creature, and evidently the man's chief means of support. On the barrow that he wheeled was an ancient gramophone which he wound up and fed with a new record every now and then, but it was such a quavering, weak-voiced instrument that no one regarded it. It was the monkey that drew the coppers, clambering down from the man's shoulder to perch on the handle of the barrow and from thence to the ground, to snatch mischievously at the contents of the neighbouring stall ; or eating a grape held to its mouth in its small hands ; or tearing to pieces some offering that proved inedible. From time to time it would spring back on to the man's shoulder and sit quietly there for a moment or two as though suddenly bored with the game. The shoulder was clearly its sanctuary, to which it retired from the world, and it was pleasant to see the man's indulgent, smiling eyes glancing up at it, as at a friend whose little ways he liked to humour.

He was a youngish, decent fellow, and he said no word unless in reply to an onlooker's question—merely stood there, smiling shyly and feeding his gramophone with the records that it obediently whispered back. It was enough that he had come with his popular monkey, that did no taught tricks but amused just by being a monkey.

It was more at home in crowds than many of the rustics who laughed at it—hairy-faced men of the farms, with their legs clamped in old leggings, and formidable boots on their feet, to whom market day was a weekly amazement. This was an everyday affair to the monkey. It ambled at the crowd's feet, lifting its small coconut of a head to search for any signs of alms. No human mendicant could be so unabashed, so impudently indifferent to everything but what was to give away.

Near by, farm hands were superintending the removal of

‘ME UM WHITE MARY.’

A TRUE TALE OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF.

BY CAPPY RICKS.

IN the year 1848, although the system of transportation had come to an end some eight years before, there were still in New South Wales very many people who, true patriots all in that they had ‘left England for England’s good,’ had survived the system, and of these, it may be remembered, for insertion on the credit side of the ledger, that the crimes which they had committed in the far-away land across the sea had been but small ones—the larger ones being met by hanging without exception.

One of the last batch to arrive in the country was a girl of sixteen, Ellen Bassett, whose crime had consisted of stealing, wearing rather, her mistress’s hair-pins, and she in the year mentioned found herself an assigned servant in the house of the Police Magistrate at Port Macquarie, a river-mouth town north of Port Jackson. The Magistrate’s gardener was also an assigned servant, while yet another three such were employed in the upkeep of the Courthouse and other buildings.

All these five unfortunates were possessed of an ardent spirit, and in the event they decided to run away and make for a far country, New Guinea, lying some two thousand miles to the northward. Only the very vaguest rumours of this far-away land had reached Port Macquarie, but these five lion-hearts ‘believed’ that if they could obtain possession of a boat they could, by proceeding to the north within sight of the Continent’s eastern seaboard, pass the dreaded

Moreton Bay district, now Queensland, and then, protected by the 1,200-mile-long Great Barrier Reef, eventually arrive at Cape York, the extreme tip of the continent, when the blue mountains of their destination would be visible, distant something more than a hundred miles. With this meagre information, and their stout hearts only as mental equipment, they essayed one of the most desperate boat voyages in history.

In the early hours of a morning they stole the Magistrate's 13-foot fishing punt, and in this tiny and frail craft they launched themselves on the first stage of their Odyssey, and sailed out of history.

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In the year 1880, thirty-two years after the opening of our story, the quarter-deck sentry of H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*, surveying in Torres Strait (very near New Guinea), at anchor a half-mile distant from Prince of Wales Island, heard a slight noise in the sea in the quiet watches of the night, and, as was his duty, immediately challenged, to receive no reply; but when, on the noise coming again, he put his musket to his shoulder and fired in the direction from where the sound seemed to come, he heard a shrill scream and a voice, 'Man no shoot um, me um White Mary.'

The woman was drawn from the water and taken on board; she was in appearance, except that she had long, straight, and now thinned hair, as 'native' as could possibly be, but all the English she could utter was the cry she had made from the water, 'Me um White Mary, man no shoot um.'

The Captain, evidently a man of some discernment, believed that possibly there was some truth in the oft-reiterated statement, and in the event the 'White Mary' was placed at a mission station farther down the North

Queensland coast at naval charge—the cost, though, being but trifling—and there she remained for some eight years in comfortable circumstances, then to change her residence for one in another world.

It soon became obvious to her guardians that she was indeed a white woman, but she had completely forgotten her mother tongue except for the few words that, while in the sea and being fired upon, had come at the bidding of terror out of the mists of the long-forgotten past. It was three years before any knowledge of English came back to her, and as she was unable to make herself understood by the English (?) speaking blacks at the station her guardians had to wait that length of time to learn her story, which took a further two years' piecing together as speech and memory slowly returned. The tale she unfolded was a thrilling one—of high faith, indomitable courage and intrepidity, deep loyalty to comrades, resource in the face of grave and almost insuperable difficulties and misfortunes, and, finally, tragedy.

.

The first stage of the Odyssey lasted but a few minutes, for the overloaded boat capsized in the surf of the river mouth; all provisions and utensils, carefully collected over a period of months, were lost in an instant, but the boat, waterlogged, was swum back to the beach outside the river, and now occurred the second theft of the night; the Magistrate's larder and kitchen were looted for provisions and utensils, and, these obtained, a second start was made on the turn of the tide, for the boat to be out of sight of the settlement before yet the sun rose above the eastern horizon.

For the first few days fortune assisted the runaways, light fair winds helped the boat along, and when bad weather threatened they either got behind some headland, ran into a river mouth, or made for a sandy ocean beach up which

they could haul their boat and await the return of fine weather. For food they fared not badly ; fish were caught, game was snared, and often they received presents from friendly blacks, from whom they learned how to make fire by the friction of two pieces of wood. Upon one occasion, though, they were eight days without either food or water—marooned on a coral cay little better than a sandbank—and upon another were compelled to subsist for days upon a diet of insects, beetles, snakes, and crocodile eggs.

In this condition there arose the question of cannibalism, as must inevitably be the case when starvation to the death threatens a party, but these brave hearts would have none of this ; it was decided by these five that in no conditions whatsoever would they so much as consider recourse to such ; they would share and share alike to the end of their resources and powers of endurance and then, if need be, die together. On this brave resolution they shook hands and never again was the question raised.

They early lost count of day and dates, for time was far from being 'the essence of the contract,' but it took them some seven weeks to win the first five hundred miles. They then sailed through a stormy strait and emerged into a great bay studded with islands around a river mouth, now the Brisbane River. A month later, and they had won to Great Sandy Island, for they again passed through a strait, longer than their first one, to come out into a wide sea (Port Curtis), and then, perhaps three months later, they came either to Cape Direction (Lat. 13 degrees South) or Cape Grenville, all then unknown and unnamed, in Lat. 12 degrees.

Here they were driven on the beach in a gale, when three men were almost drowned in the rescue of the fourth, and their frail and worn boat was sadly injured. Here they

remained for a month, enduring great hardship ; very little food was to be had, they lived on limpets, seaweed soup, and an edible, though bitter, grass. In the repair of their boat they had recourse to fibres for lashings, and large thorns for 'nails.

Their camp over this period was on a flat under a cliff which they could not mount, and one night when the sea arose it was washed away, and the humans would have shared the same fate but that they had lashed themselves by lianas to trees little better than shrubs and not strong enough to be climbed in a bid for safety. From this precarious and desperate camp they were driven by blacks who attacked them from the top of the cliff, and as they launched their boat two of the men were badly speared. They succeeded, however, in escaping to an island on which there were a few coco-palms (Night Island off Cape Direction or one of the Home Islands off Cape Grenville), and there they were marooned for another month pending the recovery of the wounded men. That they ever recovered at all seems little short of a miracle, for by this time the whole of the party had been reduced to skin and bone ; their clothing had been long gone, and their vitality must have been at its lowest ebb; they could only have lived by will power and indomitable courage on the part of each and every one.

The ebbing of their vitality undoubtedly contributed to the tragedy which inevitably befell them. They had reached to within, perhaps, fifty miles of Cape York, and less than two hundred from their destination, but as the tip of the continent was neared the tides became stronger, to run with the force of a millrace, and when such ran against the wind, as they must twice in every day, the sea in places became a boiling pot in which no open boat could possibly live, and such an overfall of tide the frail craft encountered in the

depth of a night of blackness ; she filled with water and at once broke up. All that 'Mary' could remember was swimming in the boiling surf, devoid of all viscosity, for a dark mass of land with the four men guarding her on every hand. Then came a sea which engulfed them all, and she, being turned over and over, was vomited, unconscious, on the land (perhaps Turtle Back Island at the mouth of the Escape River where Kennedy, the brave explorer, lost his life, speared by the blacks, some twenty miles from Cape York). When she recovered consciousness she was alone on the islet—her brave companions had failed to win to its safety ; without any wish to live she lay down to die, but was captured, for rescued is not the term, by blacks who swam from the mainland.

She was kept by the tribe who had captured her for thirty-one years, treated well enough by their standards, except when she attempted to escape—then she was tortured. After a few years in captivity, wandering mostly about the long peninsula, she was within an ace of affecting this. She had learned that the white men (Frank and Alec Jardine) had come to Cape York, and she escaped from the tribe, then encamped at the mouth of the Mitchell River in the Gulf of Carpentaria, and made her way travelling by night, and now with all the cunning of an aborigine, to their station at Somerset, to reach there after nightfall and have the dogs set on her, and be fired upon by the white men, who, not recognising her as a European, and fearing treachery, thought that they were being attacked by the bloodthirsty natives ; she returned to the tribe, such being, apparently, the lesser evil.

She was a wife, at various times, to all the leaders of the tribe, which was at first a large one, and in fifteen years she bore as many children, none of which lived ; some were

eaten by the tribe in starvation years, others were lost to crocodiles, while the remainder died of disease or other causes.

The tribe, becoming reduced in numbers, and to save themselves from extinction at the hands of their foes, deserted the mainland for Prince of Wales, on which they had lived for seven years when the warship came to survey Torres Strait.

'Mary' had not so much as thought of escape for ten years or more prior to the coming of the surveying vessel, but when she saw the ship so close at hand, with the sight of the White Ensign and the sound of the bugles (for she had been brought up in a west country naval port), old memories revived, though not for some time, and in the event the call to escape became irresistible. In making her escape she had not taken to the water on the northern shore nearest to the ship, but from the eastern coast some miles down, to float up, supported by a bundle of reeds, with the flowing tide and be rescued as related.

Mauritius.

BY THE WAY.

BASIC rules for the grand old English game of 'Progressive Cabinet-making' (as played in the Westminster Handicap Tournament) :

1. A player is required to move when he has either scored or, alternatively, failed to score.
2. As soon as a player has had time to examine his hand, he must play from one with which he is unfamiliar.
3. Players retain their partners until they have either swept the board or repeatedly failed to score.
4. Round pegs must on no account be inserted in round holes : breach of this rule is severely penalised and may even result in loss of the game.
5. After holding a number of hands a player may elect to proceed in the direction of the strawberry beds.
6. No number of games constitute a rubber.

[Highly educational and mirth-evoking. Can be played by any number up to 22. Calculated to make any party stay. Causes no blushes even to the sophisticated. Age no barrier to successful play. An artistic combination of luck and skill.]

* * *

We live so fast in these days that already the Coronation is half-forgotten history : before it passes quite from our remembrance, let me preserve these random jottings made on May 10 :—

(1) *In Pall Mall : an elderly man passes in talk with a friend.*

'We have to get there by six o'clock, and they'll start ragging, and they'll rag and rag until this infernal procession goes by about half-past two, and then they'll rag again

until we can get away from the Club about six or seven ; and they'll be worn out and I'll be worn out . . . '

(2) *Notice Board in Hyde Park*—' *The Coronation. Assembly Point for Generals.*'

Can you beat it ? We shamefacedly confess that we had nothing like that in the Great War, sonny—not even on the famous day in March, 1918, when, things being rather critical at the front, a bevy of senior officers at G.H.Q. changed in a night from Colonels to Brigadiers ; and if that didn't win the war, what did ?

(3) *In the Royal Borough of Kensington.*

Stranger (strolling south-east). I say, can I get down here to Curzon Street ?

Polite Londoner. No, I'm afraid that's some way off.

Stranger (smiling gaily). Well, old fellow, you have all the rights ; I'm an old Coldstreamer (*strolls off to the north-west again, breathing beer contentedly*).

* * *

What a ghastly word 'amenities' is ! Recently in a debate in the House of Lords on a project, the allowance of which, whatever its other merits or demerits, would unquestionably have resulted in a material alteration to one of the loveliest parts of Dartmoor, a noble lord was overheard to grumble under his breath that the mover of the motion for its rejection 'talked of nothing but the amenities' : his tone implied that these were only trivial considerations. Perhaps his views would have been the same if for 'amenities' had been substituted the words 'the English heritage of rural peace and beauty,' but they could not then have sounded so specious. One of the notable features of the discussion, not wholly dissimilar either in argument or result to that which had taken place a few weeks earlier in the House of Commons over a kindred project to industrialise

the Highlands, was the care with which the Government spokesman refrained from giving a lead of any kind to the House. We have, we know, a National Government, yet on such matters, which are not matters of party politics, but of permanent national concern to all lovers of British beauty, the main object of the Government has seemed to be to abstain from any expression of view which could be called governing. That is perhaps as well, as the influence of the Government, if it had been exercised at all, would probably have been cast regrettably—Government Departments have hardly ever really troubled themselves about anything but the severely material, and Ministers to-day are depressingly subservient to their technical advisers. Happily, even in an age which has accomplished more acts of excessive vandalism than normally take place in many centuries, there are still—so the division lists would appear to testify—more Parliamentary folk of private status who care for the preservation of beauty than there are for its destruction. The Highlands have a respite from calcium carbide factories, and Taw Marsh will not—as yet—be ‘developed.’ Let us at least be thankful for such mercies as are thus vouchsafed us : we need them.

★ ★ ★

Five reflections on the London omnibus strike :—
(1) To strike is to exercise force : to give evidence before a Court of Inquiry is to appeal to reason—to do both at the same time is to qualify as a candidate for lunacy. (2) We are growing a little tired of the opportunities repeatedly afforded us of showing to the envying world how calm in emergencies an Englishman can be. (3) This particular form of strike, even more than most, is against the poor and the feeble—it actually eased the rich by removing obstacles from their road. (4) Walking is good for the health : to be compelled to walk, whether one wishes to or not, is bad for

the temper. (5) If the buses had been on the streets in the second week in May, could any vehicle have moved at all :

* * *

I should be sorry to give Mr. Harold Nicolson that most vexatious of all epithets, namely 'versatile' ; but it is not very easy to avoid the temptation. In addition to instructing the House of Commons on foreign affairs—no sinecure, especially for one who holds no official office and is sitting in Parliament for the first time—broadcasting, lecturing, travelling, and being a source of pleasure and interest to his friends, he also writes books—he would, I know, prefer that his activities were put the other way about ; but so it is. I have two before me now : the first, it is true, is the printed record of a lecture—namely, the Rede Lecture of 1937—but it is now in book form for all to enjoy, *The Meaning of Prestige* (Cambridge University Press, 2s. n.) ; the other, *Small Talk* (Constable, 6s. n.), is a collection of what Mr. Nicolson modestly calls 'fugitive essays.' The first has many sentences of that ironical humour from which his writings, and speech, are seldom free, but, by its nature, it has also a real gravity and contains much on which British readers may well dwell thoughtfully. The second is in lighter vein, but is not on that account to be easily laid aside ; it is full of good things written with a casualness that is much more apparent than real. Mr. Nicolson, in an airy, even jaunty, personal fashion, has a way of getting to the heart of his subject, and his subject is often of great importance—which is as much as to say that he is an unusually good essayist (and good essayists are rare), never trivial, continually amusing and often exceedingly acute.

Another political essayist whose subject is foreign affairs is Mr. Wyndham Lewis, who calls his last book *Count your Dead—they are alive* (Lovat Dickson, 7s. 6d. n.) with *A New*

War in the Making as an alternative title. Mr. Lewis is a cult : you have either adopted it or it leaves you cold. If you have, you intensely admire his trenchant bludgeoning and violent sarcasm. To me a comparison of his work with Mr. Nicolson's tends to recall that delicious caricature by Max Beerbohm which portrayed Arthur Balfour with a violin under his arm watching Bonar Law as he bangs a drum and murmuring, 'What verve, what impressment—and what an instrument !' But Mr. Lewis's latest will, no doubt, stimulate and, perhaps, be enjoyed by the large number of people who prefer drums to violins.

A third writer on a kindred theme is Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, who returns with unabated earnestness and vigour to the charge he has previously made : the force of his new book *Towards Armageddon* (Lovat Dickson, 6s. n.) is perhaps a little weakened by the firmness of his three beliefs—namely, that all British policy is dictated by the need of making the world safe for money-making, that Hitler is beyond criticism, and that democracy is inherently contemptible. But nevertheless he gives one furiously to think and even if he does not convert, he undeniably interests.

* * *

Mr. W. Papel Hamsher does not tell us his age, but he quotes a description of himself as 'a young English student-writer-politician' and he grew a beard in the course of his travels through *The Balkans by Bicycle* (Witherby, 8s. 6d. n.) : he is at any rate old enough to fend adventuiously by himself. It is necessary to mention this question of age, for this is emphatically a young book. It has little literary grace, and a complete and refreshing absence of politics : it is just a jolly, good-humoured account of a young man travelling from Vienna to Stamboul on 'Elfa,' his bicycle, and enjoying himself very much, inconveniences and

malaria notwithstanding, and communicating his enjoyment to any reader who does not ask for more substantial fare.

A widely different book of travel and adventure is Miles W. Vaughn's *Under the Japanese Mask* (Lovat Dickson, 12s. 6d. n.). Mr. Vaughn is not a young man, nor is this his first book : he is an American newspaper correspondent of experience and standing ; and this is his roving autobiography, beginning and ending in the United States but with many years in the East in between. The book has both the merits and demerits of practised journalism : it is always vivacious and readable, its author has always 'an eye for a story' and a zest for a scoop ; but for that very reason it is a trifle lacking in considered judgments and weighed reflections. Nevertheless, the author knows Japan as few foreigners have ever had the chance to know that mysterious contradictory yet fascinating land, and his experiences have been both peculiar and extensive.

* * *

Augustine Birrell was one of those unusual figures who flit across English public life every now and again and are exceedingly hard to classify, a man of letters and chiefly remembered for his books, who nevertheless persistently declared that he was not an author, a Cabinet Minister who was certainly the reverse of a successful politician, a man of witticisms who was called on to take charge of serious and even stern practicalities, a writer and speaker, airy, inconsequent and often profound. His autobiography, *Things Past Redress* (Faber, 15s. n.), published posthumously, has the great merit of being completely in character. Few who knew him denied his charm—and the charm is here : few adjudged him successful—and the reasons for his failures are herein apparent. He was interested in too many things, often in a detached way, even to give himself up whole-

heartedly to any one of the several tasks that came to him ; and as he was in his early years so he remained to the end, a cultured, whimsical, lovable gentleman, with no rancour towards any and taking posts for which he was in reality temperamentally unfitted, not because he was ambitious, but because, as he naïvely explains over his acceptance of the Irish Chief Secretaryship in 1907, he was asked to do so—just as he says of his becoming President of the Board of Education in 1905, ‘Nor was I conscious of possessing any special qualifications for the office. I felt no hesitation in accepting it.’ It is impossible not to recognise the essential simplicity of his character or not to regret that a man of so much distinction achieved so little. But he lives in the hearts of many, and perhaps he asked no more.

* * *

In a lax literary age it has not been a thing unknown that a man, writing under one name, should review work written by himself under another : I have myself heard an author confess, or rather boast, that he had done so, adding, with a smile of cynicism, ‘I did not cut it about much.’ In spite of the illustrious, and yet singular, example of Sir Walter Scott I cannot but think that this practice is not commendable. I would therefore only venture to tell readers of CORNHILL who have from time to time graciously approved one or other of the 15 poems of mine which have appeared in these pages in recent years that if they are still so minded they can now obtain, collected chronologically in a single volume, *1904-1936 Poems* (Murray, 10s. 6d. n.), not only these 15, none of which naturally exceed a few pages, but also 204 other lyrics, a number of which are now published for the first time and, in addition, 19 long poems, the longest of which is in four books of over 800 lines each.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 165.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach the Editor by 30th July.

- ‘ and in my breast
 —— wakens too ; and my ——
 Becomes an April violet
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.’
1. ‘ Unloved, the ——, shining fair,
 Ray round with flames her disk of seed,’
 2. ‘ Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to ——
 and pray.’
 3. ‘ Now half to the setting sun are gone
 And half to the —— day’
 4. ‘ No enemy
 But W—— and rough weather.’
 5. ‘ Oh then ! O then ! thou wast a simple —— !
 And I forgot thee,’
 6. ‘ Then —— thy sorrow on a morning rose,
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,’

Answer to Acrostic 163, May number : ‘ Now slides the *silent meteor* on’ (Tennyson : ‘ Summer Night’). 1. StorM (Browning : ‘ Porphyria’s Lover’). 2. IslE (Blake : ‘ To Spring’). 3. LoveliesT (Omar Khayyám). 4. EstatE (Emerson : ‘ Give All to Love’). 5. NO (Thomas Hood : ‘ Silence’). 6. TheiR (Keats : ‘ Song of the Indian Maiden’).

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss M. Bell, Gowthams, Gunby, Lincs., and Miss Bryant, Fourways, Southend, near Reading, who are invited to choose books, as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given ; but the coupon should not be forgotten.*

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1937.

1914.

AUGUST 15-31.

LETTERS BY

BRIG.-GEN. H. F. E. AND LADY EDWINA LEWIN.

As the late summer and autumn months recur, we, who remain from among those whose honour it was to serve in France in 1914—standing as we do upon the tableland of life, still able to look back with eyes undimmed by age or infirmity and before we begin the descent to oblivion—may perhaps be pardoned if we review our lengthening memories of those days which this season brings back to us so vividly. We turn over such relics as we possess—the letters we wrote home, the loving lines we received from England which cheered us by their courage and hope, the maps, the scraps of old orders and reports, that prompt our recollection of half-forgotten incidents. We look out on our present surroundings—the corn-stooks and reaped fields, the warm harvest sunshine, the still, dewy nights. They all bring back to us intimately the anxiety, the horror—the joy and laughter, rare though such moments were—which went to make up those days when the world seemed crashing about our ears. How it all comes back to us! The valour, the generous selflessness of our comrades, which infused into our beings the determination to be worthy of their fellowship. Great days! We give eternal thanks that we were privileged to take a modest part in them, to know the men who built their splendour!

It is not for us to say whether our tales can guide the new generation. But in the hope that they may recall memories to those who lived through them, the following extracts from letters passing between a husband in France and his wife in England are presented.

The circumstances in which they were written must be borne in mind. The exigencies of conforming to the rigid rules of censorship made detailed information impossible. Names and places had all to be rigorously excluded. These have now been interpolated—the details being obtained from a brief index and war diary kept at the time. The letters from France were mostly written on leaves of a Field Service note-book, in odd moments of waiting—at early dawn, full noon, and during still hours of the night. They formed a relaxation to weariness and served many times to keep us wakeful—when sleep was the one thing longed for and yet to be resisted at all costs.

At the time war was declared the 41st Brigade Royal Field Artillery, commanded by Lt.-Col. Stephen Lushington, C.M.G., was stationed at Bordon in the Aldershot Command and consisted of three 18-pr. six-gun batteries—9th Battery commanded by Major R. G. Wylde, 16th Battery ('Old Rooks'¹) by Major H. F. E. Lewin, 17th Battery by Major H. H. Bond. The Brigade formed part of the 2nd Divisional Artillery of the 1st Corps B.E.F. Commanded by General Sir Douglas Haig.

When the Brigade left for France on August 15th my wife went to stay at Englemere, Ascot, the house of her father, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts.

H. F. E. L.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 15th August, 1914, 6 p.m.

We got here about 2.30. Just the time when you must have been entrained at Bordon. Everyone is being so good to me. Oh, I *was* the proud woman to-day when you started off. The cheery look on the men's faces did one good. Robert Doyne is here. He came over from Ireland last night and goes back to-night. He has come to get Father to write

¹ The nickname of the 16th Field Battery, it having been raised in 1795 in 'the Rookery Walk' of Woolwich Arsenal.

a word of encouragement to Mr. John Redmond who is raising the new Nationalist battalions. Susie¹ is coming tomorrow, she has telephoned that she has just seen Hugh off.

Canadian Pacific Rwy. S.S. 'Mount Temple.'

Saturday, 15th.

We arrived at our port of embarkation (Southampton) at 4.45 p.m. Every village and house we passed in the train showed union jacks and tricolours, and people ran out cheering. We are now all embarked (9th and 16th Batteries) and expect to sail in half an hour. The C.P.R. have done us royally and have a great spread prepared. We shall land, I fancy, at daylight at Havre, but the Master has just told me he won't know definitely where he is to take us until we are at sea, but he anticipates Havre. We are ordered to keep the horses saddled up whilst on board, so they will have their saddles on for more than 24 hours.

It was perhaps fortunate to-day when we arrived down in barracks that I had only just time to leap from the car and on to 'Susan.' Everyone in greatest spirits and playing up grandly in spite of the damp weather. God bless and keep you.

Englemere, Ascot.

Sunday, 16th.

Your letter of 15th came to greet me early and it did me such a world of good. I know it was best yesterday that when we got down to barracks you only just had time to fly out of the car and be off. After all good-byes are only

¹ Lady Susan Dawnay, whose husband, Major the Honourable Hugh Dawnay, commanded the Squadron of 2nd Life Guards in the Composite Regiment of Household Cavalry which sailed with the first units of the Expeditionary Force. He was subsequently killed on 6th of November, 1914, at Zwartelen, when commanding the 2nd Life Guards in the successful counter-attack of the Seventh Cavalry Brigade during the first battle of Ypres.

sadness, and when one's whole heart is with you, there is no good-bye.

I hear Longjob¹ went first to Paris to confer with Grand Q.G. and then to your concentration area. The Bishop (Bishop Llewellyn Gwynne, Bishop of the Sudan) goes out on 21st, but I fear not to 2nd Division as all arrangements had been made for your chaplains.

Such a busy day. As soon as I was dressed I went down and joined Father at family prayers. Then he had masses of letters to sort and attend to. It seems as if every soul in the Country is writing to him, mostly to get them to France, and wires coming in from India by dozens.

Le Havre.

Sunday, 16th.

We have had an excellent night, quite smooth. Some of the horses were off their feed last night—due, I fancy, to strange surroundings and vibration. 'Susan' and 'Belmont' tucked in well, however. While the steward is getting me a bath I begin a line. No land in sight yet. Horizon not clear, but it is early—5.30 a.m. As we went to sea last night all the sea area in the Solent was brilliantly lit by ever-moving beams of searchlights from ships and shore. Now not a ship to be seen. I have not yet read the King's message to the Battery as it was dark and raining last night when we had finished stables, so I will read it after stables this morning.—A transport with 11th Hussars just appeared up behind us while we are stopped for the pilot. We flag-wagged to them, 'Our Compliments to your Colonel-in-Chief.'² They replied, 'We hope to meet him.' 9.30 a.m. Still waiting for pilot. 3 p.m. We did not get into harbour till

¹ Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, then Deputy Chief of General Staff at G.H.Q.

² The Crown Prince of Germany.

11.30 a.m. and are now having a tedious time disembarking our guns, etc. We are to billet in some warehouses in the town for the night. I have had several chats with French soldiers and a French Hussar Officer who is hunting for our 4th Cavalry Brigade to which he is appointed interpreter. They have no news in particular, but assure us 'Tout va bien.' An American whom I stumbled against hunting for some goods of his firm which had gone astray, tells me that until we joined in over this war the people here were dejected, but as soon as we made known we would stand by them they at once flew flags and cheered up in the most wonderful way. 7.30 p.m. Our billet is a large Godown filled with Cotton. There are roofed and paved courtyards in front of these in which we have picketed the horses. It is hard ground for them with no bedding. The Cotton smells abominably so we have stretched our mess tarpaulin against some piled timber outside and are quite snug. 9 p.m. General Munro¹ came round while we were at dinner and had a cheery buck with us. We all took to him.

Englemere, Ascot.

Monday, 17th.

There is very little news and one just longs to hear where you are and how far you have got.—I fancy you are in the train pushing on to the Belgian frontier. News has just come in that General Grierson has died in the train from heart failure—I suppose it is very hot. Father said good-bye to him only two days ago. Such a charming letter from Captain Grayson² saying your letter had helped him so much and he

¹ On mobilisation, Major-General C. C. Munro took Command of 2nd Division in place of Lt.-General Sir Archibald Murray, who became Chief of the General Staff at G.H.Q.

² Captain A. D. H. Grayson, Reserve of Officers. We were old friends in the Regiment, having served together as subalterns in the same battery. He was killed in action in France 13th October, 1914.

realised he must continue to do the job to his hand and not rush madly at others. Father will do what he can to help him to get back to the regiment, but he is overwhelmed with applications from men imploring him to get them to France.

I am writing a letter to each of the wives of the N.C.Os. and men of the Battery to try and hearten them up and remind them to write here to me if I can be of use. It is all so peaceful, sitting in the verandah, as one has done hundreds of times before, that I can't believe you are really gone, but keep feeling you will be here by tea-time. Then I remember you are in the midst of all the work and I am filled with pride. Father has been sent a message from Belgium that the forts at Liège are all victualled, armed and ready to hold out for two months or more, and two months is the time they are wanted to hold out for.

Englemere, Ascot.

Tuesday, 18th.

How far have you got, I wonder? One does long to know and to have one glimpse of what you are doing. I have been having a talk with an old friend who used to pose as a socialist—very crestfallen, and all his old pacifist ideas removed. He feels their politicians have misled them terribly. It is a great awakening. Your Father and Mother have gone back to Tunbridge Wells as they want to be near home these days and they tell me Nora is looking wonderfully well. The papers have at last been given leave to announce the arrival of our Expeditionary Force in France—it has all been well and silently done. I will send you Colonel à Court's account each day from the newspapers as it is the best summary and will show you what we know. Having appeared in print the Censor will pass it.

In train en route for Concentration Station.

Tuesday, 18th.

I keep sending you at convenient opportunities a printed official postcard as I hope they will get through quicker than my letters which have to pass through the Censor's office. We shook off the dust,—and there was plenty of it,—of our Cotton Godown early this morning and we are now all entrained waiting to start. Our time-table allowed us 4 hours to entrain, but we took less than 2. At Bordon we were less than 35 minutes, but then men and horses were all accustomed to the rolling-stock. Ronnie¹ is busy issuing bottled beer to the men. Indefatigable as ever, he wisely suggested that if we did not do something about it the men might make their own arrangements, so we bought up the stock of an auberge by the station and he is dealing with it. He grows cheerier daily and is the greatest comfort. Yesterday I met Wilfrid Jelf. He is Staff Captain R.H.A. with Cavalry Division H.Q. and says they are the finest sight he ever saw. To horse them, however, they have broken up 'K' and various other Horse Artillery Batteries.² It seems terrible they should have to do this. Fancy if they had to break up a crack battalion to enable another to mobilise! All five of us dined last night at a big Restaurant not far from our bivouac. It was a most amusing scene, the place filled almost entirely with British officers in Field Service dress, many of us rather grimy from our bivouacs. The Staff looking more spruce from their hotels! We met all sorts of friends one hadn't met for years. There was much talk as you can imagine! I heard late in the evening that

¹ Captain, now Brigadier C. R. B. Carrington, D.S.O., then Captain of 16th Battery.

² 'K' Battery Royal Horse Artillery was the battery in which Lord Roberts had served when a subaltern.

Godfrey¹ had arrived to join the Cavalry Division with Hubert,² but I could not get to see him. I fear we are in for a long tedious journey. The horses are strangely restless, and are kicking a great deal. We can't make out the cause. In England they have always stood perfectly in trains. I fear we shall have many lame.

Very little news. We gather from the French papers that the French have sunk an Austrian Cruiser in the Adriatic and captured the flag of the German 132 Regiment. This seems to have pleased everyone greatly. It is also reported there is a general Russian advance against both German and Austrian frontiers and that Sir John French has had a great reception in Paris.

Later.—In train en route to Concentration Station.

I wonder if you got the letter I posted on 17th containing my copies of the King's message and Lord Kitchener's memorandum to the troops? I posted it at a civilian post-office in Havre. The little lady behind the counter would not hear of my putting a stamp on it. She was quite charming, saying France could take no money from the brave British Army. I fear it may have miscarried owing to my not having sent it through the Censor. I did not at the time know the proper procedure. As we slowly journey along we are received at each station by large crowds cheering loudly as we clank slowly through. If we stop, ladies run along the platform giving the men cigarettes, and ask for buttons and badges from them as 'souvenirs.' I have been honoured by the gift of several rather formal bouquets of flowers. At one station the old Commandant greeted me cordially as a brother 'Commandant,' and introduced me to his wife, who told me

¹ Major Godfrey Gillson commanding 'D' Battery R.H.A.

² General Sir Hubert Gough, then commanding 3rd Cavalry Brigade.

their daughter was a governess learning English at Londonderry, while their son—'Grâce à Dieu'—is on the frontier. The old Commandant told me he was born at Metz and was taken prisoner there in '70 and now his dream seemed to be going to come true that he would go back and see it once again a French town.

It is most annoying. Just now as we slowly steamed out of a large station where we had stopped to water and feed and the men had coffee, we passed another troop train just arriving. I happened to look up and saw some officers slowly passing our window and then looked to see the name on the shoulder-straps of the men in the next carriage and saw 2.L.G. I called out to them, 'Is that Major Dawnay's Squadron?' and they replied, 'Yes.' So Hugh and I have been very close to one another without meeting! It has been a lovely day, now drawing towards evening and the colours are beautiful. Ronnie—the ever practical—is busy setting out food for our dinner from Mother's (Lady Roberts's) hampers which have held out in marvellous fashion and he assures me there is enough yet for another day! Please thank her again for her kind thought of us. We have done nobly on them.

Englemere, Ascot.

Wednesday, 19th.

Such a joy this morning when they called me with your letter of the 16th.

Bill¹ turned up last night but vanished at dawn this morning. He fears they will be tied by the leg here guarding Cambridge for ten days or more yet. Maddening! — when every man we have must be wanted so desperately with you. I loved every scrap of your letter, for it was

¹ Lt.-General Sir William Furse, then Colonel Furse, G.S.O.1, 6th Division.

just all I wanted to know. It had been opened by the Censor. We get very little news, only a few words passed by F. E.'s bureau ('Eye-witness'). Of course that is quite right and all we can expect, but one cannot help longing for more. I am so glad gallant General Smith D.¹ is succeeding poor General Grierson. God bless you.

Grand-Verly—Aisne.

Wednesday, 19th.

Well, we have arrived at our Concentration Station and are quartered in a charming undulating country—green and prosperous looking. It has been a glorious day. We detrained at four o'clock this morning, having been altogether 20 hours in the train. We watered and fed at the station and the men breakfasted and rested a bit after their journey. Then we hooked-in and marched eight miles to our billet in this village which contains the other two batteries of the brigade. The horses are picketed out in meadows by a delightful stream, the guns between them and the village. The men in barns in the village on the hillside and we—(Rooks officers)—are living with Monsieur le Maire and his capable, bustling, laughing wife in the greatest comfort. The subalterns declare it is the best picnic they have ever been on! The one fly in the amber cropped up when Robinson² announced that my valise is nowhere to be found on the G.S. wagon! It must have dropped off somehow on the journey up. At first I thought the loss irreparable, but on looking into things I find I have absolute necessities in my wallets and saddlebags and the undefeatable Ronnie has pressed a spare pair of socks and a shirt on me and is having a horse blanket sewn into a sack and with two bought blankets I shall sleep sound.

¹ General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien.

² Batman.

I saw George Morris¹ to-day. The Irish Guards are in the next village to us. He was full of fun and fire. He told us that altho' all his officers were given flowers on the way up, he alone of all of them was kissed on both cheeks by a lovely lady. I told him I should report the matter at once to his Regt: Colonel (F.-M. Lord Roberts, Colonel Irish Guards). We have no news. The men had a story of a prodigious Naval battle and victory, but as the paper from which they got it gave the source of the news as Oporto I feel sure it is only a canard.

Englemere, Ascot.

Thursday, 20th.

The papers tell us our troops have joined the Allies and that you are in the midst of things. We ought to hear more in a few days. It is wonderful how the news has been kept dark. We have been up at the Grand Stand all this morning. It is shaping very well for a hospital and can be got ready in a few hours if wanted. I hear that Slatin is doing Red Cross work for Austria. I am so sorry for him. He must be torn in twain and so miserable.²

Letters still pour in to Father offering help and service. I fear it is impossible for them all to get to France. Nora sounds very cheerful on the telephone and is sending me articles of clothing for the 'off the strength' wives of the battery who, I find, want help. The Laszlos (Mr. and Mrs. Philip de Laszlo) have been to tea. We all felt so sorry for him as he must have many friends on both sides.

¹ Lt.-Col the Honourable G Morris, commanding 1st Battalion Irish Guards.

² Major-General Sir Rudolph von Slatin, Inspector-General of the Sudan : he was an Austrian subject though serving under the Sudan Govt. for many years, and was home on leave in Austria when war broke out. He had innumerable English friends, and visited England frequently and not long before had stayed at Englemere as the guest of Lord and Lady Roberts.

*Grand-Verly, Aisne.**Thursday, 20th.*

Have just got our orders for our first move towards the enemy and start to-morrow at 8 o'clock, in direction of Belgian frontier. Presuming we make no contact—and I gather it is unlikely—we are to march 26 miles to a place called Maroilles. At the moment Ronnie is hard at work plumbing the intricacies of one of our new telephone instruments which has gone wrong, owing, I fancy, to the too energetic handling of one of our signallers. The telephones are extraordinarily good, and Ronnie will, I feel sure, get this one right before he gets to bed. The Colonel looked in on us before dinner, and over the map we tried to piece together our scanty bits of news, but could not make much of it.

Yesterday I met Mary Davies.¹ He is on the Staff of our Division. I am glad we have him. He tells me he heard yesterday from Longjob,² who was in great health and spirits.

The men have been first-rate in their behaviour to the people on whom they are billeted. Last night I found a party digging the garden of their host, and to-day the shoeing-smiths are repairing an iron gate for an old gentleman. Oddly enough the farmers don't particularly seem to want help. George Morris told me he volunteered to turn out his battalion to help get the harvest in, but they replied they did not need them. Some evening they thought they might be glad of 25 men to lend a hand! They all seem so calm and cheerful, and steadfast. Fancy our people with our brothers and husbands away at war and foreign troops billeted on us. We should, I fear, be far from at our best and decidedly 'edgy.'

Ronnie has just got the instruments to work. Great

¹ *Later Major-General L. Price-Davies, V.C.*

² *F.-M. Sir Henry Wilson, his brother-in-law.*

rejoicing ! I must be off to my comfortable four-poster bed in the best bedroom. M. le Maire and his charming, cheerful wife cannot do enough for us. Good night.

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 21st.

The Bishop of Khartoum¹ wrote Father a most charming letter about you. I was very proud.

It seems the poor Belgians are going through such a grim time, having to leave their beloved Brussels. They must so dread what will happen to all their beautiful things. We are told their new position is strongly entrenched, and in the meantime the French are driving a good wedge between Metz and Strasbourg.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 22nd.

A week to-day since you went. Father tells me your battery is in the thick of it and we may expect decisive news in a day or two now. I fancy postcards get through quicker than letters on account of time lost in the Censor's office, so I enclose one in case you can use it. I see Lord Cavan has been brought back from the retired list. I find the separation allowances have not been paid yet to the wives, so some are rather pressed for cash. However, the S. & S.F.A.¹ are helping, so I hope there will be no actual want.

La Longueville—France.

Saturday, 22nd.

We marched yesterday and to-day, billeting most comfortably. Hugh Dawnay turned up to-day just as we

¹ Bishop Gwynne.

² Soldiers' and Sailors' Families' Association.

got into billets here, in a priceless Rolls-Royce car. To his fury he has been dragged in from his Squadron on to the Staff at G.H.Q. He told us something of the general situation which otherwise was the complete fog of war ! But the utter surprise was that he produced my lost valise—picked up by his Squadron—of all people ! Isn't that an extraordinary piece of good fortune ! We are all fit, well and cheery. The weather has been perfect, heavy dews at night, but as we were under cover this did not affect us !

George Morris and his lads are just across the street from us and as I write I can hear the soft accents of your dear land blending with a babble of foreign tongues.

It is most wonderful to feel we are out on a job as big and momentous as was Waterloo. It quite thrills one, and you feel that if ever you are to be a man you must be one now. I must be off to the battery on one or two small jobs. Everything running very smoothly and well.

Englemere, Ascot.

Sunday, 23rd.

You have been so near to me all to-day. First when Father read prayers and then in Church when our wedding day kept coming back to me. Captain Grayson has written to tell me he has been sent to Preston to help raise a battery there. He supposed 'it was right enough for an old "dug up,"' so I had to write and tell him that Father said we wanted real good men in this country if the new army is to be a real live fighting machine. I hear that when the Horse Artillery batteries left Newbridge the streets were lined with Nationalist volunteers all singing God Save the King. Such a thing has never been dreamt of before. There is no news to give you. I long to chop off my hair and come out as your trumpeter !

*Quévy Le Petit, Belgium.**Sunday, 23rd.*

Marched 4 a.m. in direction Mons in Belgium. We were advanced guard Battery as yesterday and the day before. I was told to-day that a squadron of our Cavalry advancing yesterday came suddenly on German infantry, dashed at them and rode clean through them, losing only one man although the Infantry were firing hard all the time. I can only give this for what it is worth. I don't even know the names of those concerned. We started out this morning expecting a Waterloo, but are now halted some two miles short of Mons which seems to be full of 3rd Division. In the meantime it has come on to a fine mizzle of rain. We waited about 2 hours here and had some food, and then got orders to retire to billets in Quévy Le Petit.

*Englemere, Ascot.**Monday, 24th.*

The papers are full that the great battle has begun, but no news has come through officially, so we must just wait. The War Office are being very kind, and telephone each evening to Father. He has gone up there to-day seeing the Powers that be. Aileen¹ went with him to see about some Red Cross work, so Mother, Euan² and I are having a quiet day here. Euan is being really too charming to me and can't do enough to help me. He hurries round with all the extra papers that arrive and has been such a help in sending out the women's names and addresses to the various branches of the S. & S.F.A. who are helping wives and families till their separation allowances are paid which I believe will not be until the end

¹ Lady Aileen Roberts, now Countess Roberts.

² A young cousin, then a boy at Wellington, now Lt.-Colonel E. A. Miller, King's Royal Rifle Corps.

of the month. It is quite hot here. Bill (Furse), and his lads are ramping to be off!

In action N.W. of Village Quévy Le Grand.

Monday, 24th.

After all we had a scrap last night—a very unsatisfactory one as far as we were concerned, for we did nothing, and were in no danger.

Just as we were sitting down to a gorgeous tea in the parlour of the charming farm our luck had led us to as a billet, Ronnie came in saying the C.R.A. had just ridden past and ordered the battery to turn out, and giving me a map spotting where I was to meet him. I got off at once, telling Ronnie to come on with the battery as soon as he could. I had two miles or more to go forward towards the village Harmignies. It was a lovely still summer evening and church bells were ringing in a village through which I went and I met two old ladies in their Sunday blacks wending their way peacefully to Church. It was the most un-warlike scene you ever saw.

Now I am writing in a 'dug-out,'¹—by an orchard wall. Bombardiers Cooke and Theaker are with me and we are trying to get the flash of a German heavy gun that occasionally flings a shell over our heads. We are rearguard battery and are not firing although we are much amused watching Uhlan patrols some miles off gingerly moving forward, then halting with much precaution, and finally tittuping back, but evidently in no hurry to 'push on.' We can't spot the flash anywhere and we think he is only playing long bowls from a long way back and wasting William Hohenzollern's ammunition.

¹ *A mere hole cut behind a hedge. In no way to be regarded as like those we subsequently took to!*

Englemere, Ascot.

Tuesday, 25th.

Your letter of 18th came this morning and gave me so much joy. So glad you saw Wilfrid Jelf and so many old friends. A postcard of same date also arrived. They don't give much news, but they tell me you are there and well.

I have been picturing 'the old Rooks' at work. The retirement seems to have been splendidly carried out. It was sad news yesterday that Namur had fallen, but you all appear to be keeping the Germans well in check and I am full of hope. I am so well, so you are not to worry about me for a moment. The Russian hordes seem sweeping along grandly and from pictures of them they do look huge, uncouth, but very determined men and with their pressure on the Germans one hopes the pressure on France may be released. It is difficult to keep your Father and Mother informed of news as things change so fast that no sooner have you written a letter than there is a big change. I have been writing hard all the morning, and this afternoon been up to the Grand Stand working at preparing the hospital. It ought to be very nice when ready. Lucas and all the stable-men have enlisted. Also the footmen, so we are doing well.

Bivouac near Malgarni.

Tuesday, 25th.

Your letters of 15, 16, 17 and 18 were given me this morning as we marched off at 4.30 a.m. I saw the bravest thing I ever saw yesterday. I was talking to George Morris at the time and we watched it together with our hearts in our mouths. One of our airmen flew down the length of the German position. He was fired at all the way by their anti-aircraft guns of which they apparently have any number. They wreathed him in haloes of smoke. Still he held on and

disappeared from our sight. Five or ten minutes later he reappeared returning down their line and was again greeted by the same fusillade. We held our breath and thought every moment to see him brought down, but he held on quite unconcerned, and finally wheeled and flew over us. George Morris said, 'Make a special note of time and place and we'll put him forward for a V.C.' We have had a long hot and dusty march to-day, having moved off at 3.45 a.m. and arrived here—Landrecies—about 2 p.m. Are comfortably bivouacked in an orchard at East end of the small town. Irish Guards are in the houses nearest to us.

Etreux.

Wednesday, 26th.

We had a desperate time last night. We had hoped for a quiet one—for this strategic movement to a flank, or otherwise, had been, and remains, most fatiguing and never ending. About 4 o'clock there was a scare of Germans being upon us and we stood to. It however was said to be only a bazaar rumour among the inhabitants. At 7 o'clock there was a sound of gun fire and we again stood to. It quieted down almost at once, but at 8.30 p.m. there was a furious burst of firing at the opposite end of the village to our bivouac. We were just hoping to get something to eat after our return from the second scare. The firing was intense and was soon followed by gun fire. When it began, the Corps Commander (General Sir D. Haig) was in the town. I believe he intended making it his Hd. Qrs. for the night. I was standing on the road in order to get any orders that might be sent along, and as the rifle fire boiled up, his car passed me at speed, and I saw him sitting on the back seat brilliantly lit up by an electric light over his head and his A.D.C. beside the driver. It was an anxious time, for no one could throw any

light on the matter. Later, in the dark as we stood there, two stout women mounted, and in flowing riding habits passed, coming out of the town. At the moment we were busy man-handling a gun out to sweep the road and it did not strike me as peculiar,—but when I had time to reflect, I thought two lone women out pleasure-riding on such a night was a bit queer and I called out to head and stop them, but they had gone. I heard afterwards they had asked one of the sergeants in broken English what was the name of his Captain. I cannot help thinking they were men dressed up and were spies. There was nothing for us to do. All the fighting fell on the infantry and glad we were they were the 4th (Guards) Brigade. The enemy were in greatly superior numbers and were trying to break in at every street at the Guards' end of the town. At first they tried a surprise by dressing the leading troops as French. We stood listening to the fighting in perfect safety altho' at the other end of the town it sounded as if the combatants were not more than thirty yards apart. Three times the Germans charged yelling 'Deutschland' and we heard them checked by the steady 'Three rounds rapid' of the Guards. At last a howitzer was manhandled up through the town by young Willcocks¹ who got it right up to our barricade, from there with his first round knocked out one of the enemy's four guns, after which the remainder ceased to fire. At one o'clock we got an order that the Artillery were to withdraw south at 2 a.m. and take up positions in the dark on the hills overlooking the town to cover withdrawal of the infantry. We thought we might be savagely attacked at any moment,—however, in the grey dawn we found quite a good retired position with forward observation from a garden. The sun rose in splendour and

¹ Lieutenant H. F. Willcocks, 60th (How.) Battery, of 49th Brigade, R.F.A.

the fighting had completely ceased and we watched the infantry slowly filing out and up the road towards us in perfect order. Torquhil Matheson¹ of the Coldstreams, who I believe had been commanding down at the barricades, was stained bright yellow from head to foot from the picric of the exploding shells. He looked the most unconcerned person of all the party !

There was not a sign of a German anywhere. They had had a bellyful of the fare those splendid Guards had given them !

We have marched entirely unmolested to-day, but there is a great battle going on W. and N.W. of us,—and not so very far off either ! Whether it is the French Army or other Divisions of our force we can't make out, but whatever happens it is high time these Germans got a knock. As it is, it is heart-breaking to see the inhabitants who received us so splendidly having to vacate their homes and flee before an invading Army. It is all so strange and odd. Here am I now at 3 p.m. of a glorious afternoon writing a letter in comfort under a haystack, with the battery mostly asleep behind me. The village clock striking the peaceful hours in the valley below, and last night it was battle, murder and sudden death ! Meanwhile in the distance is that continuous thundering hammer going on unceasingly. I wonder what it is ?²

Thenelles.

Thursday, 27th.

We are supposed to be in for a big affair to-morrow, so may the God of battles be with us all, and may we do our duty. Up to now we have really not been under any serious fire, I wonder how we shall like the real article ? I am not at)

¹ Now Lieut.-General Sir Torquhil Matheson, K.C.B.

² This was the battle of Le Cateau being fought by IInd Army Corps B.E.F. under General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien.

all happy about the fight we heard going on yesterday. I can't help but feel that, tired as we were, we ought to have 'marched to the sound of the guns'—even if we could only get up in the evening as old Blücher at Waterloo. I hope they got on all right.

Your letters are the greatest comfort and joy. I don't think you will ever know how I value them. Please thank Aileen for hers. She told me, as I knew well, that you had surprised them all with your bravery. Please also thank Mother for the telescope. It is a perfect joy to me and I use it unceasingly examining the landscape for Teutons. I have not been able to send a line to Father and Mother, so please let them have what news you can. I have not yet seen a sign of Longjob or any of the great ones of G.H.Q. except Hugh whom I met yesterday on his rounds. I shall hope to give him this to post. I must get some sleep now.

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 28th.

Two dear letters from you this morning 19th and 20th. Father is getting you the climbing irons you asked for and will send them through the War Office. Everyone was of course so amused over George Morris being kissed by the lovely lady. Yes, some day we will go off on a little trip to see all the places you have been in. I shall want to hug M. le Maire and his delightful wife for being so kind to you all. Mrs. Thorne is sending out each week two parcels of clothing addressed to O.C. 16 Battery and I said I would ask you to see they were distributed to different men each week. I am also sending you copies of telegrams which Sir E. Goschen has published giving particulars of how the Germans behaved to the Embassy and Staff before they left Berlin. They are interesting. There are all sorts of rumours going about.

One is that the Germans made women and children go ahead of them in order to prevent their being fired at—do you suppose there is any truth in this? If not it is very unfair. Father and Mother out for a drive yesterday came across a big wire cage up near Blackdown in which were about three hundred prisoners—Father is thrilled at the way our troops have behaved and has wired to Sir John French, ‘Heartiest congratulations and warmest good wishes to one and all on the magnificent stand you have made.’ Recruits are coming in well and now they have raised the age to 35 we ought to have more numbers. Bobbie White¹ has raised a regiment of 1300—young Stock Exchange men. They are to be three months under training and then he hopes to sally forth with them to France. They ought under him to be a magnificent battalion.

P.S. Peter Sherston has enlisted in King Edward’s Horse, and is in seventh heaven.

Deuillet near La Fère.

Friday, 28th.

Yesterday in the evening a German aeroplane flew over where we were entrenched, coming so low we could see two men leaning over the side. Rifle fire was opened on them—we could not elevate nearly enough—and they dropped several bombs which did no damage. We heard afterwards they came down in 1st Division area with two killed and one wounded on board. The battle we expected to-day did not come off.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 29th.

It has been such a lovely day, and we hear you are to have a day of rest, so I hope you may be having the same weather.

¹ Brigadier-General the Hon. Robert White, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., late Royal Welch Fusiliers, then partner in a stockbroker’s firm in the City.

Cecil Wilson¹ is here for a night and dear Lady Hugh² is also coming.

Just a fortnight since you left. There are rumours of every sort going about, but I just try not to listen to them for they can only fuss one. Good night, God bless you.

Deuillet near La Fère.

Saturday, 29th.

We arrived here yesterday after our week of retiring and are resting to-day. Doubtless you will know better than we all the incidents which have taken place. They have been big, I believe, and thank God the British Army has once again shown it can do its duty and take punishment without breaking. We hear all sorts of compliments, but as Ronnie says we personally have hardly been under fire or in much danger so feel we cannot lay much claim to the honours. This morning we heard a tremendous Artillery combat begin to North of us on ground from which we retired yesterday. It was a tremendous cannonade. The great German pounding sound, answered by the French sharp rap of four guns in rapid succession. It has died down faintly, appearing to move Northwards, which looks as if the French have driven the Germans in that direction. I would we had not been so tired and could have chipped in to have a smack at these brutes who have so mobbed us back during the past week. The Cavalry and Horse Artillery have done magnificently. The cheery way they talk about taking on either infantry or Cavalry Forces twice their own size is perfectly splendid. They don't seem to consider it an affair unless they are well out-numbered !

For the past two days we have had marching with us a gun

¹ *Wife of F.-M. Sir Henry Wilson.*

² *Lady Gough, widow of General Sir Hugh Gough, an old Mutiny friend of Lord Roberts.*

and six wagons of Godfrey Gillson's battery¹ which got cut off from him in the action on 26. They tell me Godfrey fairly let into the main body of the enemy who cut off his wagons, but that he limbered up and got away quite safely. One of the subalterns has just worked out the distance we have marched and it comes to a 140 miles as crow flies in eight days. This not including moves in action, etc., etc., and, as we were up entrenching or 'standing to' most nights, you will realise that we have been thoroughly busy.

The most pathetic part of all has been the hordes of poor refugees fleeing with us. A few in big wagons and country carts, but the majority walking and carrying what they can on their backs. It is heart-breaking! People in England should see it. They would realise then what war means.

I am terrified that if Captains are wanted for Horse Artillery I shall lose Ronnie. What I shall do without him I can't say. He takes all the troubles off my shoulders and packs me off to rest and looks after me in every way. He is the most joyous of warriors, for I do honestly believe the prospect of a scrap is as wine to him, for he grows then more cheerful, helpful and beaming. The subalterns, too, are all splendid. I had about 100 letters to censor to-day from the men home. A wearying process when you are dog sleepy.

As I always said, after a fortnight's warfare we should all know more about the art of war than all the manuals. I feel I could draw up now a really useful little handbook for Artillery containing facts little realised at Practice camps. One thing we must have and that is special aeroplanes detailed to observe exclusively for Artillery.

Sykie² must be a very proud man. His men have done

¹ 'D' Battery R.H.A.

² Major-General Sir Frederick Sykes, then Colonel Sykes, Commanding Royal Flying Corps.

splendidly. One of them came down near us the other day with engine trouble and in a quiet chat told us quite calmly and in most modest manner in the world that he had shot two German airmen in the air !

Please tell the little Chief (Lord Roberts) that the telephones are working splendidly.¹ The only drawback is to keep the wire from being cut. The other day Wylde's battery came under hot fire. The wire forward to Wylde at his observation post was cut at once in three places. Wylde saw targets of German troops that you dream about, but with his communication broken could do nothing, flag wagging was impossible. Meanwhile his battery was silent and only suffering casualties. We shall have to go for wireless telephones in future.

We marched past Sir John French yesterday in the market place at La Fère, but I saw no sign of anyone on the Staff. I send you our first little news bulletin that we have received. This destruction of the XXth German Army Corps by the Russians sounds good. And I am sure Bulky² and his old Greys gave a good account of themselves.

Englemere, Ascot.

Sunday, 30th.

I hope you may get this quite quickly, for it is to go by the messenger to G.H.Q. The Indian Divisions should be home soon. They left about 24th. Father is delighted at their being brought to France. He feels it is so important that India as part of the Empire should realize she is taking her share

¹ The Government pattern battery telephones in 1914 gave very poor results. Lord Roberts, knowing this, immediately mobilisation was ordered, bought sets of telephones from a civilian firm which he had previously tested and presented them to batteries of 41st Brigade R.F.A and various other batteries in 1st and 6th Divisions.

² Lieut.-Colonel C. B. Bulkeley-Johnson, Commanding Royal Scots Greys.

in the struggle and is trusted to do so. A funny rumour has been about, that Russian troops came round from Archangel and were landing at Ostend. I think it must have been the Gillies who talked Gaelic and have, I know, been coming South.

Leo Maxse came to luncheon yesterday. He was so unbelieving about the Russians that I had to bet him 5/- that the rumour was true. He was of course very amusing and full of stories of German sympathisers and agents in high places. He has kept a close record of the wobbling of ministers just a month ago. Some day we must get him to show it to us. Lady Hugh sends you her best love. It does one good to be with her. Her great regret is that her son Geo died last year and so is not coming home to fight with his beloved 15th Sikhs. We hear Marines are being sent to Ostend. That we have evacuated Boulogne. The *Observer* tells us that a German Army Corps has been withdrawn from the West to cope with the Russians who have invested Königsberg and are not far from Posen. They are coming on well and their transport arrangements are said to be excellent,—a very different army from the one which fought Japan. Japan is holding the China Seas. It is odd that she and Russia now find themselves fighting side by side. There has been a sea fight and we are reported to have sunk two of their cruisers—no names of ships in which any of your belongings are serving are mentioned and our losses seem very small. You will let me know if there are things the men want. God guard you all.

Bivouac two miles North of Soissons.

Sunday, 30th.

A gruelling day. Marched 3.30 a.m. The rumour being that the fight we heard yesterday N. of us had not gone too

well. Hence our march is directed S.W. Thick mist at first and road leading through dense forest. About noon we halted for two hours at Coucy le Château. A terribly hot day and the infantry so exhausted we put as many as possible up on our vehicles and the gunners marched.

Got here about 6.30 p.m. A cheering rumour that has gone round is that the Russians are within 3 days of Berlin. It is said to come from the Greys, who are reported to have it from their Colonel-in-Chief (the Czar); the Germans are also said to be opening *parlementaires*.

Englemere, Ascot.

Monday, 31st.

Your letter of the 26th written during and after the fighting came to-day. I can't tell you the relief it was. Only the numbers of casualties have drifted through and not a name or regiment mentioned, so one never knew where you were or what had happened. Thank God all is well with you. The rumour I spoke of yesterday about one of our allies and which I said was untrue is, I believe, true. If so it is indeed a dawn which will break for us. Garvin in the *Pall Mall* spoke of a dawn breaking, and one could not understand him. Now I believe this is what he meant. Father has had a very interesting letter from Hugh, but he is in London to-day. Dear old Sir Dighton (Probyn) came yesterday. He told Aileen that a verse to help me was Isaiah xxx, verse 15: 'For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.'—Dear old man, he has been so kind and understanding, and so has Sir Charles Brownlow. I send you an account of a Naval battle,—no names of anyone we know.

(To be continued.)

RABINEK.

BY FRANK MELLAND.

FORTY years is a long time in Central Africa, where history as we know it only began within living memory, and if the story of Rabinek, the Rubber King, is not told now it probably never will be, for there are not many living to-day who remember him. But among those few is one of his partners who shared with the resourceful and fearless trader his greatest and last adventure. This is that great-hearted Irishman Mickey Norton, now back again somewhere north of Lake Nyasa, after a wearisome exile in London, during which he and I, who first met in Africa shortly after the events herein described, amused ourselves by piecing together this and other stories.

I do not know if Rabinek's name is still remembered in Blantyre and on the Great Lakes ; but when I first put my foot in Keiller's Transcontinental Hotel—a hostelry that was nothing like as grand as its name—had a sundowner on board the old *Gwendolen* at anchor off Fort Johnston, and faced the storms of Lake Nyasa with Livingstone in the *Adventure*, the talk was of little else. The day of the buccaneer was then ending, but only just. Robert Codrington was beginning to create an administration in North-Eastern Rhodesia and the remnant of the poacher-traders was either turning respectable or, like Mickey, seeking pastures new ; but Rabinek, the greatest of them all, was dead.

He had been born somewhere in the Balkans. His father, a high official in the Austrian railways, had been a Jew, his mother a Christian. For awhile he held a commission in

the Austrian army and used to relate with glee how he was dubbed 'Mark Time,' that being the only word of command which, owing to chronic inefficiency, came readily to his tongue. Inevitably, therefore, his stay in such uncongenial surroundings was short: he deserted, and made his way to Constantinople, where he arrived penniless.

Rabinek may have been a poor officer, but he was a live wire and a wonderful linguist, so he soon acquired a 'patron,' some dignitary at the Court of the unspeakable Abdul, with whom he stayed long enough to become proficient in Turkish and Arabic, his duties consisting of purchasing gowns and perfumery destined for the ladies of the Imperial harem. Keeping his eyes open, he noticed that others in similar employ had a habit of disappearing suddenly, in consequence of which, ignoring his agreement to serve a definite term of years, he decided to vanish while the choice of method still was his. He had put by some money—not saved out of his meagre pay—and arranged a passage with a Greek captain who was sailing for Egypt.

So it was, some time in the early 'eighties, that he set foot for the first time on African soil and was soon at home in Cairo with a more or less socialistic Austrian community which included Slatin Pasha, doomed later to languish for years as a prisoner of the Mahdi.

His next move was to German East Africa, where, in 1885, Dr. Peters had been granted a charter for the German East African Company, which became the German East African Association in 1887 and lasted until the territory passed under German Imperial control in 1890. The most promising area was considered to be in the north, in Usambara and on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, where experiments were made in growing coffee, tea and tobacco. To help this development a railway was started from the port of Tanga

towards Kilimanjaro, and Rabinek managed to secure for himself one of the most important positions on the construction, largely on the vicarious prestige he assumed on the strength of the former standing of his father on the Austrian railways. He also dabbled in business, being responsible for the first good store in Tanga, in the building now used as the Post Office ; but this proved his undoing, for he was soon declared bankrupt, which was a serious offence under German law and necessitated his sudden departure. He vanished into the interior and did not stop until he had crossed the border into British territory at Karonga in British Central Africa, now Nyasaland. He was befriended by the Resident and, as always when in difficulties, using his wits and imagination, spun a plausible yarn, with the result that the kindly official advanced him money to purchase trade goods and make a fresh start.

Thus it was that he moved over to North-Eastern Rhodesia in 1898, running into Norton near Kasama. After an adventurous youth, Norton had landed at the Cape, where for a year or so he had been a policeman. Then he moved gradually north, starting with service under the Reform Committee on the Rand before and during the Jameson raid ; then moving on, on foot, to Bulawayo, the Beira railway construction, Tete, Blantyre, and so to Kasama. He traded rubber and shot and traded ivory. Rabinek had been conserving his limited stock of trade goods and, having acquired some native fish-nets, he fished with them in the Chambeshi, swapping the catch, when dried, for rubber, a humble beginning in view of what was to come. Gradually both these men moved, quite independently, farther west and met again at Kazembe's on the Luapula, when both were doing fairly well. Rabinek at the time might easily have passed for an Arab, being very dark-skinned, with a heavy

tan, and having rather thick lips. He was about 5 ft. 7 in. tall, and squarely built.

There were, at this time, about a dozen white men of different nationalities, and of very varied origins, travelling occasionally in couples but generally entirely alone in what was, in effect, a No Man's Land, accompanied only by a few native retainers and their carriers. From choice they kept to country not yet administered, where there were no licences or restrictions on trade or shooting. Filibusters they were, but—and I speak here from personal knowledge—they were not robbers or evildoers. When they passed, as they had to with the advance of law and order, they left behind them a clean spoor, and are remembered with kindly feelings. In fact the chief survivor, Mickey Norton, has always been assured of a great reception whenever he returned to his old haunts, and his friendliness with the natives stood him in good stead when he served on Intelligence on the German East front in the War. Thus they were able to travel about among warlike, savage tribes, carrying with them sufficient wealth to arouse the cupidity of all, yet came through, in almost every case, without misadventure. Fever and elephants took their toll, but not the spear or tower musket. Granted that their safety depended on decent behaviour, it is still to their credit that, even in times of sudden crisis, racked maybe with fever, they kept steady and played the game. Indeed, they made it easier for the Government, legitimate traders and missionaries who followed after, for they built up a good name for the white man.

Norton had been for some time more or less centred on the Luapula, where he had established a camp near Mwambwema, being engaged in lawful trade on the British side of the river, and doing just as he pleased on the side of the Congo Free State, for the nearest point therein where any

sort of a licence could be obtained was at Lukafu, and the rule of King Leopold was purely nominal, his sole representatives being bands of *ruga ruga* (irregulars) armed with Albini rifles, who roamed the country in detachments of about twenty, forcing the natives to bring them rubber and ivory for their masters at Lukafu. For this they paid, sometimes, something like a penny a pound for rubber and sixpence for ivory, in gunpowder and caps, or more rarely in trade goods. Norton himself at that time was getting from 2s. 6d. up to 3s. 6d. for rubber and from ten to twelve shillings a pound for ivory in cash or goods; but the latter were not always easy to get, as the African Lakes Company to whom he sold the rubber and ivory were themselves in the business, poaching as Rabinek and Norton were poaching, but with this difference—that the buccaneers took their own risks while the Company sent out superior natives from Bandawe, in B.C.A., in charge of *tenga tenga* (carriers), who were generally Atonga from North Nyasa, a tough and enterprising race. These gangs, carrying trusses of calico, each protected in six gunny sacks, ranged far into the Congo Free State and were ruthlessly attacked and plundered by the *ruga ruga* from Lukafu. Indeed, Norton himself often took tribute from them, as he considered this form of competition unfair, and, moreover, if he had not, the odds were that the *ruga ruga* would get the lot, and throw in a good deal of murder.

Many will remember how the same kind of thing occurred about ten years later in another No Man's Land, the Lado Enclave and that part of the Congo Free State to the south of it, west of Lake Albert. Into that area went a large company of European adventurers acquiring ivory by shooting and trading. Some Indian traders in Uganda, at Hoima and elsewhere, to whom the Europeans sold their poached ivory, thought it a good idea to enter into the

game themselves and fitted out expeditions on the same lines as the African Lakes Company had done farther south ; but the white buccaneers, considering this unfair and the hirelings fair game, relieved them of their booty whenever they encountered them.

Referring to the attacks made by the *ruga ruga* on the Company's poachers, Norton attributes the fact that the white poachers themselves were never attacked to the knowledge of the fact that they were all first-class shots, and also to a prevalent belief (possibly started by a white man :) that the spirit of a white man killed in this fashion would bring trouble to the slayers. He, himself, often met the *ruga ruga*, but always managed to keep friends and frequently traded with them. They were mostly West Coast natives, led by ex-non-commissioned officers (native), and carried the Free State flag, a yellow star on a blue ground. I have little doubt, from an intimate knowledge of his whole career, that Mickey was a natural diplomat, possessed of tact and resource. The fact that he is full of admiration for these very qualities in Rabinek seems to me like the admiration of one useful in an art for the absolute master, and if he had lacked these qualities it is incredible that a genius at the game like Rabinek would ever have taken him into partnership.

For that is what happened. Norton had come into camp after a lengthy expedition, when he received a note from the Austrian asking if he would join him in a trip far into the interior where he had already got large quantities of rubber hidden. Norton set off at once and met Rabinek at Kazembe's with a German, Lucas, and a Frenchman, Preskia. There was by now a Free State outpost at Mpweto where the Luapula leaves Lake Mweru, and some of the buildings were actually in British territory, the river and a

half-way line lengthwise through the lake being the frontier. In charge was Hobroe, a Dane, and to him Rabinek sent runners with a letter asking for a permit to trade. Hobroe however, would not grant this, as he was trading himself. Rabinek realised that Hobroe would not venture to trade far to the west, where the country was entirely in the hands of the rebels, a big revolt having broken out, in the course of which nineteen Government posts had been wiped out and all the Europeans massacred, so he persuaded Hobroe to grant permits to go there and trade there for 'stamped' ivory. Theoretically, when the natives brought in ivory to the Government the official took one tusk and stamped the other to show that it was cleared for sale as a commercial transaction, but in practice the native very rarely got away with the second tusk. So when Hobroe explained to Rabinek and Norton that there was plenty of this stamped ivory, they, although fully aware of the facts, accepted the permits because they knew of other hoarded ivory. Having secured the precious bits of official paper, they then fetched from the British side 500 loads of trade goods, 100 muzzle-loaders and plenty of powder and caps, which shows that Rabinek was no longer a pauper. Indeed, he remained on the British side to arrange for further supplies and Norton moved off once again into the Free State.

After two days he arrived at Luwansa, where he met the famous pioneer missionary, Dan Crawford, and—three miles away, at Chita—the traveller, Poulett Weatherly. Both these were astounded to hear that Norton had a trading licence, and Mickey made the most of it, without disclosing the restricted terms in which it was made out. In this way he was made known to the natives as an authorised trader, for no one could spread that news about authoritatively better than Dan Crawford. The Irishman pushed on

south to Mwanga's and in three nights purchased several tons of ivory and rubber and, as arranged with his partner, took the whole consignment to Simba's on Kilwa Island on the British side of Lake Mweru. There he waited some little time for more goods, but as they did not arrive he set off west again to the Cahamanyongo River, some ten days' march away, leaving word with Simba to forward any communications from Rabinek, whom he did not expect in person for at least two months.

On this new trip he came into very close contact with the rebels, who were in complete command everywhere. They were chiefly *ex-askari* from the West Coast who had rebelled against their officers and then made common cause with the local inhabitants whom, of course, they overawed. To anticipate slightly, one of these men who hailed originally from Lagos, told Rabinek—with whom he conversed in French, one day in the Rua country—the story of his desertion, which is possibly worthy of record, *ex-parte* statement though it be.

The Free State officers had sent him and other *askari* out on a raid. The regulars in this party numbered a hundred and with them was a large contingent of *ruga ruga*. Having accomplished their task they returned with a considerable haul of ivory, but found that in their absence the officers had taken their wives. That led to the revolt in his particular section, and they marched up to protest to the six Europeans who were gathered together on the veranda of a house. As they approached one European called out to the others, 'Present Arms!' The *askari* did not wait for anything else, but rushed the position and killed them all. The teller of the tale added, 'There was no burial—in the ground,' for the local natives, Batutela and Manyema, were cannibals then, whatever may be the case to-day.

The same kind of thing occurred elsewhere, until the whole of a huge country had fallen from the hands of the Europeans. It was from men such as these that Norton bought many tons of ivory. So far from his base rubber was too clumsy to handle, and he restricted himself to ivory, and it would seem that he earned all he got, a lone white man in such a country at a time when the black man had got the upper hand by killing off the whites.

The whole land, indeed, was in state of chaos, and presented a fine opportunity for the one white man in the midst of it, provided he could keep his head and his nerve and was accorded a reasonable amount of luck. Deserter was armed against deserter, chief against chief, and all against each other. The slaughter that went on was terrific and all the natives lived in stoutly stockaded villages, always prepared to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Lions abounded, and many, finding human corpses plentiful, acquired the taste for them so as to become confirmed man-eaters. Of the many which Norton shot, he came on two actually devouring the man they had killed. This was in a sanitary trench just outside the stockade, to which the unfortunate victim had been compelled to pay a visit. Norton, proceeding there at dawn, with his rifle, found two lions feasting and bagged them both.

In spite of the rich haul he had made Mickey described this trip as having been undertaken chiefly to spy out the land, and some may recollect how Stanley found certain villages hereabouts in which tusks were actually used for veranda posts and other domestic purposes, so common and of so small account was ivory. By this time, however, the most remote and hidden corners of Africa must have been made painfully aware of the value set upon the great white teeth (and on rubber, too) by the white races. Norton,

having 'looked round,' returned to Kilwa Island, with a handsome profit to show for his prospecting ; but, though he found that some trade goods had arrived for him, the amount was not excessive. There was, however, a note from Rabinek telling Norton to proceed to Luwansa and await him there, adding that he had chartered some dhows and would follow in them with between 800 and 1,000 loads, which conveys some idea of the colossal scale in which this poaching was carried on. One reckoned forty loads to the ton.

In the meantime the Free State officers at Lukafu had heard of Norton's lucrative journey to spy out the land, and at Mwanga's news reached him that they were fitting out a strong expedition to arrest him. As a matter of fact, a lieutenant with some troops actually arrived at his camp with this intention, but the lieutenant was so ill that Norton had to nurse him, and the *askari*, who were absolutely mutinous, fraternised with Norton's men, so that no arrest took place, and the Irishman continued to trade on a big scale, sending tons of rubber and ivory into Simba. He then moved on by canoes, of which he had a fleet, to Luwansa, where he met his partner, who had already collected big gangs of carriers, obtained partly from Crawford and partly from the chief Kazembe.

Rabinek and Norton both knew that as little as thirty miles to the west of them King Leopold's men had ceased to rule, and thither the Austrian had already sent, in advance, Maurice Green, whom Norton had met previously. They also heard that Hobroe had been largely reinforced and was out for Norton's blood, chiefly because on one occasion that officer had commandeered his canoes and loaded them with his own goods. These Norton had found and had 'unshipped the goods,' at any rate that is how he put it, and he added that Hobroe objected to his competition in

trading so close to his own *boma*. Anyhow, it did not worry Mickey and, after spending a night with Crawford, he and Rabinck went right out into the unknown west, and, as Norton laconically remarked, in words that are distinctly reminiscent of Xenophon, 'We arrived at Kayumba's, a large and prosperous village, where we collected ivory and rubber in abundance.' For a long time I could not get much more out of him. I traced altogether some thirty years of my friend's adventurous life, and continually he passed over some thrilling section because it seemed to him commonplace. Had I not heard parts of them years ago over the camp fire in Africa I would have missed my clues. The following is, therefore, a summary of what he told me.

'Whilst Rabinck, Green and I were at Kayumba's, an immense village on the banks of the Lufira near its junction with the Lualaba, we solved the mystery of the chief's pet lions, of which Crawford, who had never been there, had told us. His story was that these lions, more or less tamed, were kept by Kayumba, and were apt to prove unpleasant to unwelcome visitors. They turned out to be pigs, to which we were introduced soon after our arrival. Hearing a lot of grunting we went to investigate, and found a large body of natives struggling with a live pig which Kayumba was sending us as a present. So much for the lions.

'One morning I remember we had pork chops for breakfast. We were feeding, as usual, in a big open space and on this occasion about a thousand natives were squatting round to watch us eat: a most unusual occurrence. We commented on this to them, whereat they laughed and moved off. About two months later our cook and his assistant quarrelled, and the assistant told us that at this breakfast, instead of pork, the cook had served up human

flesh. He had been bragging, it would appear, that we were wonderful seers and knew everything, so the chief had threatened him with instant death if he would not test us by serving up human flesh and calling it pork. We challenged the cook with this, and he owned up. Green then remembered that he had called for a second helping !

‘ On Lake Mweru I often saw human hands (a particular delicacy) in the *askaris*’ haversacks, and I am not sure that the habit has altogether died out. However, placed as we were, unless we saw one killing another so as to eat him there was no call for us to interfere, and we could, in any case, have done nothing effective. Kayumba himself told me that his greatest enemy, Kisi, had eaten his, Kayumba’s, sister, but I do not think that was why he was his enemy. It so happened that we helped Kayumba capture Kisi’s village because we, too, owed that gentleman something. We had sent two messengers to him with our salaams, and he returned their heads only, throwing them into our camp one dark night. He paid for it in full.

‘ Yombo Yombo was the great chief who opposed and defeated several Belgian expeditions and, had he lived and continued to hold his people together, I believe the Free State would have found it exceedingly difficult to reconquer the country ; but he died, and that made things much easier for them because he left no successor of like calibre. Over there in those days all power seemed to depend on personality. Titles might be hereditary, but power was not.’

Rabinek soon started back with an instalment of three tons of ivory to open up communications with the British side of the Luapula, a proceeding which his partner describes as ‘ a very tall job.’ He sent runners to have some dhows ready at a certain spot on Lake Mweru, and he reckoned that, travelling fast, it would take him a month to get there,

and would be some three months before, with stores replenished, he rejoined Norton and Green, who were, meanwhile, to continue trading and accumulating ivory.

On arriving at the lake he found a dhow awaiting him as directed, boarded it, and told the captain, who was drunk, to make for the British shore, some twenty miles distant ; he then turned in. There was a strong south wind blowing and when he woke in the morning he found himself at Mpweto, the Belgian *boma* at the north end of the lake, and Hobroe and several other Europeans waiting for him. 'Rabinek,' says Norton admiringly, 'was full of guts and guile,' so he stepped ashore as if Mpweto had been his most desired haven instead of the last place at which he would have chosen to land. Then he received another shock. He was introduced to a Monsieur Luvec who had just come out from home with unlimited powers to reconquer and pacify all that part of Africa and convert it into a paradise for Belgian traders. This official accused Rabinek of gun-running and several other crimes, but added nonchalantly that Hobroe was nearly as bad ! The distinguished new-comer was accompanied by his wife and a large retinue and they entertained the trapped buccaneer to lunch. This is so typical of Africa : the writer can recollect, some thirty years later, by the railway, when he was trying a white man for manslaughter, he and the Crown Counsel, the Counsel for the Defence *and the accused* met at the club and played tennis together in the evening.

Over some wine Rabinek told Luvec that, hearing that such an important and illustrious man had come out from home, he had caused his dhow to put into Mpweto so that he could pay his respects to the distinguished new-comer ; and then he proceeded methodically and graphically to make Luvec appreciate the immensity of his task : the whole of

Katanga and beyond being in revolt meant that he would need an army corps or more, and many million francs, to subdue it, since his colleagues had not made themselves loved, as the widespread revolution proved.

On the other hand, Rabinek continued, he and his partners, Messieurs Norton and Green, were known to and trusted by all the rebels, both by the *ex-askari* deserters and by the up-risen chiefs and villagers; Rabinek said that he and his friends held the key to the position and if Luvec granted them a concession all would be well, but that, otherwise . . . an army corps and endless expenditure over years. Planning as he talked, and watching the other closely, the Austrian continued. He knew that he could secretly export much ivory and rubber by the back door to the west coast, so he offered Luvec then and there a shilling a pound on all ivory and sixpence on all rubber that he passed through to Rhodesia and the east, and in return said he would pacify and police the territory with recruits from Rhodesia.

After some argument Luvec agreed and a contract was drawn up, signed and witnessed, the witnesses including the African Lakes agent, Gibbs, and one witness offered Rabinek £10,000 on the spot for the concession, but he refused, saying 'No. The Lord Mayor's coach or else the dung-cart for me.'

Rabinek then drew up further agreements giving the north-west sector of this huge area to Norton, and the south-west to Green, each on a fifty-fifty basis as regards profits, and each had to deliver ivory and rubber as directed at the nearest Belgian post. These agreements were sent off at once to the partners, with a full account of all that had happened and of the nature and terms of the concession, and an accompanying letter described how he had succeeded in getting it, besides extricating himself from an exceedingly

awkward predicament. It is from that letter that these particulars are recorded.

Rabinek then made for Blantyre in British Central Africa (Nyasaland), and it was then that he was so fitly named 'The Rubber King.' On the strength of his concession he raised between £15,000 and £20,000 of trade goods on credit, the conditions being that the suppliers—Michaelles, Paolucci, the A.L.C., and others—would deliver the trade goods at Chienji, the British port on Lake Mweru, while the concessionaires, trading with these goods, would hand over ivory and rubber at the same time, the money resulting from the sale thereof being placed to their credit until the debt was extinguished, and neither Rabinek nor his backers had reason to believe that that would take long. The commonest estimate at the time, as I myself can vouch, of the value of this concession was the same as that which mystified the banker on whom Monte Christo called with his letter of credit; it was 'unlimited.' It seemed to everyone in Central Africa that the Austrian Rabinek, Mickey Norton the Irishman, and Maurice Green from England, had the means of tapping an inexhaustible source of wealth, and it was for that reason that everyone was anxious to have a finger in the pie. They clustered round the deep-tanned traveller at Keiller's hotel, where he drew rough maps with a stick on the soft brick floor, or with a wet finger on the bar counter; they followed him as he went about his business at Mandala and Kubula, all competing in giving him credit; and when it is remembered that for some years now he had been providing evidence by the ton of the existence of this wealth, which was now backed by an official monopoly concession, it is, perhaps, not to be wondered at.

But cups have a way of being dashed from expectant lips, and this proved no exception. Rabinek hurried back from

his successful deals at Blantyre and pushed through without delay to Mpweto. On arrival there he was arrested—some say on the British side of the frontier—put in chains and sent off to Boma, at the mouth of the Congo, to stand his trial on a lengthy indictment. Half-way across a continent, in equatorial heat, in irons ! Luvéc, it appeared, had been ordered home, the concession he had granted had not been ratified and he himself was dismissed. When this was known, when the favoured concessionaire had fallen from grace, charges were rapidly framed against him, and warrants issued to await his return. Some months had elapsed while he travelled to Blantyre, made all his arrangements and returned, and he arrived at Mpweto completely ignorant of this dramatic change in his fortunes.

On this occasion he had no chance to bluff ; no opportunities of displaying his ‘ guts and guile.’ The dice were loaded against him and he left Lake Mweru on his long trek to the Atlantic, a chained prisoner. He died *en route* and it was freely said that he was murdered, but of that there was never any proof. The case assumed some international importance : there was the question as to where he had actually been territorially when he was arrested, on what charges the arrest had been made, why he had been put in irons, and why his concession, duly executed by a competent official, had been cancelled ; all of which occupied the courts in Brussels for some time, but nothing came of it all. Central Africa was a long way off, evidence was unreliable and conflicting, our Foreign Office was not greatly interested because, after all, he was a foreigner, and the Dual Monarchy showed still less concern, for he had been a deserter from the army.

Norton and Green heard the news, and learned how they themselves were outlawed ; but they continued to trade

and to evade all efforts to capture them for a long time. At last as government closed round them they made off, crossing over the southern border of Katanga, by the source of the Kafue, with considerable booty ; their experiences during the whole of this time were on an epic scale, but that is quite another story. This is the story of Rabinek.

IN SPRING.

*In Spring, when we still wandered
The sighing woods among,
Woods which had known us leafless
And now were blossom-hung,*

*You turned, and wept, and hardened
Your heart against love's sweet,
Saying for little reason
That we no more must meet.*

*You broke the bud and scattered
The seeds of dream away ;
But they fell soft, and flourished
And flowered another day.*

*A day when I had hearkened
And learned my lesson right,
And saved my heart from sorrow
At cost of all delight—*

*O bitterness of meeting !
What twisted trick of fate
Made my love flower too early
And your faith bloom too late ?*

FRANK EYRE

DARK HORSES.

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

[At Merton Magna, in East Devon, live Richard Challice, wheelwright, Ivy, his wife, Leonard, Samson, and Linda, his children, and Verity, his old mother. Simon Pye, friendly, retired neighbour, engages Richard to look after his orchard and Linda as maidservant: he makes friends with the Challices and gives Richard his dream, a piece of land on which is a disused lime-kiln. Simon's son, Gerald, visits his father and sets his snares for Linda. Simon and Richard both oppose his suit.]

XI.

THE LETTER.

FATE has an art to frustrate human good willing and turn many a sweet seed into bitter fruit. An impulse of pure friendship may provoke a tragedy and bring desolation where only help and healing had been planned. A sentence half heard, a syllable misunderstood, an inflexion of voice, or a look misread—trivialities changed from their purpose in the alembic of another mind—will precipitate only dross and poison where the hope was for pure metal.

In the case of Richard Challice and his daughter, disaster turned upon a question of time. For love and faithfulness she was at pains to inform him of her future actions; but the event demanded that he should not know before they were actually committed. She set down her plans on paper and, by an accident of chance, they reached her father too soon. Subtle impulses contributed to the catastrophe on both sides, but nothing save the girl's affection for Richard was at the root of it. Had she obeyed Gerald Pye to the letter of his parting directions, she had saved alike the young man and her father from great evil.

It is a difficult matter to keep the most trifling secrets in a village, since affairs of their neighbours are always the supreme interest of the folk. The wider world without offers but a trivial challenge to local politics, and while good fortune and successful happenings win their measure of attention, calamity or tragedy possesses more salt, and any great pending clash of wills, or crucial event still in the balance, can provide ceaseless distraction and entertainment, both before its despatch and long afterwards.

When Gerald wrote to Linda and sent his letter to the care of Miss Mingo, he had judged that privacy was secured and Susan alone would know of its arrival ; but the racy fact, though concealed from Arthur Tidy, the postman, was divulged in one ear and Linda's mother learned it. The girl came for her letter early on the appointed day ; but at a later time Ivy entered the shop-of-all-sorts and Miss Mingo felt justified in cheering her spirit with the news. She held it up for a little while that her customer might speak first, for they were entirely at one in their view of the situation and Ivy knew that her friend was full of indignant sympathy.

Mrs. Challice did not immediately refer to the paramount subject, so Miss Mingo asked a question and hinted at news. She felt rather proud of having been made a confidante for the lovers.

'What's puzzled me more than enough touching your trouble is your husband, Ivy,' she began. 'It beats the mind of a simple soul like me to know why he put his foot down against 'em. However could he come it over such a fine pair as them, and so well adapted ?'

'You can ask me,' answered Ivy. 'For that matter I've asked myself. I'm the calm sort and never known to get up in the air, though plenty to make me in my home ; but though I've given Richard his chances time and again

to put his reasons before me, he haven't done so. It wasn't Mr. Pye : that's clear. He said to Linda that according as her father agreed or disagreed, he'd do the like. He didn't disagree till Richard did, so that's let him out. I feel very sure old Verity's at the bottom of it.'

'Why, Ivy, why?' asked Susan. 'Why the mischief should Granny hate the young fellow?'

'I couldn't tell you, but she got a down on him from the first minute she saw him. He drank his tea along with his father in our house and was very nice and gentlemanly as a man could be, and I took to him from the first; but she said rude things about him the moment his back was turned.'

'Most interesting, Ivy,' declared Susan, 'and shows your cleverness. And I'm with you, because I know 'em both, and a more resolute young man than him you won't easily find. And love laughs at locksmiths and a lot else. By the same token—for your ear only—there came a letter for Linda this morning, sent to my care. When he came in to say "good-bye," he let me understand the letter would come, and it did come, and no eye saw it but mine and Linda's. She called for it good and early and I handed it to her. Like a davered rose the poor girl looked, and well she might, I'm sure; but I dare say there was that in her letter to cheer her. Don't you squeak about it, however, nor let her, or anybody else, know she came by a letter to-day.'

'You can trust me,' promised Ivy, 'and I'm not surprised for that matter. Was it from London?'

'Oh yes, London was the postmark.'

But Mrs. Challice failed to keep her undertaking, as people will without any deliberate purpose to evade it. That evening, when alone with Leonard, she told him in confidence that Linda had heard from Gerald Pye, but warned him to let the fact go no further; and Leonard, at a later

time, impulsively revealed the secret under sudden stress. So things happen.

He went to the 'Cat and Fiddle' that evening to meet a lad with tastes akin to his own, save that while Leonard operated as an under-gamekeeper, his friend rejoiced in the free trade of fur, fins and feathers which he held to be right and just. But the poacher failed to keep his appointment and Leonard only met the usual visitors at drinking hour. The affair of Linda's was still fresh and attractive, and her brother found that the argument for the moment ran on his father.

Old Sloggett rather tended to support Richard, though he seldom supported anybody, and David Beedell agreed with him; while others took the opposite side. Their difference turned on character, and Leonard backed Arthur Tidy and others, who held Gerald to be a fine fellow.

'So like as not though,' said Tidy, 'we'll hear no more about him. Fine though she is, your sister ain't the only pebble on the beach, Len.'

'She's the only pebble for Gerald,' answered Leonard. 'He's a man and he knows his own mind and she knows hers. And she got a letter from him this morning anyway.'

'Not her,' answered the postman. 'That I can vouch for, Leonard.'

'You ain't everybody. She did get one,' declared young Challice, 'and my mother knows it. But you can keep that to yourselves.'

Tidy took a professional interest in this revelation.

'I grant you it could be done,' he admitted.

'It was done anyway,' replied Leonard, 'and no doubt she'll get more and I bet something will come of it.'

Two evenings later Richard heard of Linda's letter, being about the last to do so. None had learned of it from her

and none ever saw it but herself, yet its existence was common knowledge and occasioned lively comments. The young hoped for a sequel; the old ceased to be interested and, along with Dick and Simon Pye, trusted that the crisis was passed.

Then Mr. Beedell, getting Mr. Challice alone in his bar one evening, told him about the letter—news that disappointed Dick, yet occasioned no surprise. He attached little importance to it, yet mentioned the matter to Verity, and she renewed her entreaties to watch Linda.

‘I wish to God you could lock her up,’ said the old woman. ‘They’ll work in the dark, and who’s to prevent ‘em?’

Concerned with this prediction her son slept ill and the next morning was up earlier even than usual. The orchard always gave a pretext for haunting ‘Prospect Place’ and Richard presently sought Linda at the house. Mrs. Butters could not tell where she might be and had not as yet seen her—a fact that wakened Richard’s alarm. Linda was only in the village on a personal errand, but Dick felt fear, though he concealed it and went out. The bungalow stood on one floor and, knowing Linda’s bedroom, her father went to the window and tapped upon it. The blind was down and no answer came, but seeing it open at the top, he raised the sash, looked in, noted that her bed was tumbled and guessed that she had slept there. Relieved in mind he glanced round, and was going away when something caught his eye immediately within the window. A table stood beneath it, where Linda was used to keep her few books and pen and ink, and an open letter stared up at Mr. Challice. It lay there apparently unfinished and he looked a second time, because he knew Linda’s large handwriting. Then he concentrated upon it closely, for it had been written to himself.

‘My very dear Father,’ it began. For a moment Richard hesitated, since the letter was not sealed or directed ; but circumstances prompted him. The letter was clearly designed for him, and though at another time he might have left it to reach him when his daughter willed, to-day and under present stress he felt no dishonesty attached to the reading. He could read it easily, for it lay under his hand ; he picked it up therefore, turned it over and found that it was complete and signed by Linda on the other side. It took him but a minute to read it but many hours to decide exactly how to act after doing so. Thus wrote his daughter.

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,

‘It’s terrible hard to do anything against your wishes, but this is to tell you when you made me choose between you and the man who is going to marry me, I had to choose him. If you’d but given a ray of hope I’d have hung on and waited for Gerald to show you how wrong you were to think so cruel against him ; but you wouldn’t even do that much, so we know it’s no use waiting. But I hope and pray you will see after we are married what you wouldn’t see before. This comes, dear Father, to tell you that I’m going to Gerald on Thursday night next, and by the time you read it on Friday morning I shall be along with him in London to be married the first minute possible. And so soon as I am, then I’ll write to tell you and Mother all about it.

‘Gerald comes for me to Withy Platt Bridge in his car at a bit after midnight and I shall go with him, and if you can’t forgive me when you hear tell, I’m sure to God you will presently when you know how happy we are together for evermore.

‘Your affectionate and loving

‘LINDA.’

Richard guessed that she had written on rising that morning and intended to leave the letter, or post it, so that

it should reach him when she was gone. But now he knew everything down to the details, and first a wave of immense satisfaction swept over him, while a sense that Providence had deliberately saved the situation made the man feel almost devout. But upon these emotions there crowded a hundred others to bewilder him, question him and reveal the immense problems now demanding to be solved. He stood with the letter in his hand staring before him, lost in the maze of his thoughts. Then he became conscious of what he was doing, put Linda's letter carefully back on her little table, drew down the blind and hurried away.

From that hour he lived in a mental turmoil and envisaged his response from varied points of view. He traversed the roads of fierce anger and sense of outrage, of condonation and conciliation. He looked at it as Linda doubtless did and forgave her. She had acted normally. His anger against Gerald Pye also waned when thought took a certain shape. He told himself that by doing absolute justice to them in his mind, he would be the more likely to arrive at a just action when it came to action. What was the sum of their offending and how far might direct interference be justified ?

The hour was still very early when Richard left the bungalow, and he did not return home immediately, but went up to his own ground and sat on the little seat he had built for Verity. The sun was now up and the river shining. Day had dawned fair.

A preliminary problem faced the wheelwright, and that he determined to solve before he fell in with any fellow-creature. He asked himself whether he should confide in anybody else and seek aid from another before this challenge. Instinct turned against the idea ; but he went so far as to name those who might assist him. On the physical side he felt not in need of help, but he considered whether Simon

Pye or his mother might advise as to the actual line of action. A strange impatience with both of them flitted through his thoughts. He could not understand it and wondered why he should feel vexed with them. Then he saw the reason. • But for them—but for Verity's open hate and Simon's distrust and doubt—Dick would never have quarrelled with young Pye at all. Between them they were really responsible for the present situation. Such a futile and fruitless idea alarmed him ; but then he remembered other things.

He determined finally to keep the matter to himself and neither consult any other nor reveal what was going to happen. Two reasons assured him in this resolve : he felt himself quite equal to confronting the runaways if necessary and destroying their plans, and he also perceived that, for Linda's sake, such a course would be far the kinder. None need know in that case of the terrible mistake she had prepared to make—none save himself. He reached this point in his deliberations and then returned home to breakfast. The working day demanded all his attention now, and though this supreme matter was never wholly out of his thoughts, he did not devote further deep consideration to it until night came. Then he went out and strolled upon his own land again, for he knew that he would think to best purpose there. Now he was always unconsciously at his best with his foot on his own little plot of earth. He knew it, felt it, had often become aware of the ruined kiln's queer power to breed calm in the consciousness of possession. The emotion never wore off : it came as a rare anodyne to life and preserved an active gratitude for the giver.

Richard lighted his pipe and attacked the problem from the point of Linda. He was determined now to frustrate the lovers, intervene and separate them ; but the exact means

remained doubtful and his sole concern was that the blow should fall lightest upon Linda. Secrecy appeared the thing to aim at, and given another sort of woman the difficulties had been slight ; but she was firmly and definitely against him now. Her mind would not change under any pressure from him. She had been called to choose between her father and her lover and no doubt attended her choice. That was natural, for what doubts could exist ? Only force in the last extremity would keep Linda from joining Gerald, and while Dick did not hesitate to exercise that force, the problem was how to apply it. Words were certainly useless, but what deed was it possible to commit, what actual violence needful to employ ? To keep them apart he had determined and apprehended no cost to himself, or feared the cost to Gerald ; but what must be the cost to Linda ?

Many courses presented themselves, and it was among them that his determination weakened and he thought yet again of confiding in another. But he stopped this hesitation by telling himself that decision had already been made on this point. He was going to act alone and in such a manner that none save the lovers themselves need know of his action. He had come to no final determination when he returned home and went to bed.

On Wednesday he told himself that every detail must be worked out and his plans made and approved. Then he ran over the situation as it must appear to Linda and considered her movements when the night came. Should he anticipate her purpose before the event, or wait until the very last moment, when she had met Gerald, and then rise up between them ? He inclined to the latter course, because he believed no other would satisfy Linda herself and, knowing little of Gerald Pye's true character, he felt the break best made with him present. Richard judged that any man

capable of doing what Linda's lover had meant to do must be a coward at heart, and he even contemplated the possibility of showing his daughter what young Pye really was when faced with direct action. He felt no malice, but proposed to use his strength if that proved needful when he arrested the flying pair. Then Linda must quickly perceive the stuff of which her hero was made.

A vital thing he did not know ; a second all-important factor he forgot. Richard was about to confront, and if need be attack, one who never lost his temper, yet who never denied himself the luxury of hate. It was a deadly combination beyond his ken ; while his item of forgetfulness centred in this : that Gerald would be armed with a weapon against which the physical power of ten men had been as futile as the power of one. To the last, this peril never entered Dick's mind, and had it done so he had easily enough separated young Pye from his immense advantage. But the possible malevolence of a defeated man did not trouble him and the malevolence of a victorious man he had imagined impossible. Richard was strengthened, moreover, by conviction that the Providence responsible for his discovery would support him to the end. Not only that, for with his thoughts never far from Linda, he believed the coming night's work must ultimately console her grief and open her eyes to the righteousness of the deed he was about to do.

XII.

WITHY PLATT BRIDGE.

Ivy Challice enjoyed sound sleep, as people of her placid temperament are apt to do, and Richard, leaving their bed without awakening her, stole with his clothes to a little

landing outside the door. He dressed, descended to the house place, put on his boots and left Church Cottage before twelve o'clock on the appointed night. He stood on Withy Platt Bridge in twenty minutes and, casting about for a hiding-place, found one apt to the purpose but little more than ten yards from the river. There opened a break in the hedge where he could stand unseen.

The hour was overcast yet not dark, for a moon shone behind thin, far-reaching canopies of cloud that hung low above the earth. No wind stirred and only the fitful voices of night disturbed an ambient peace. Under the bridge deep currents flowed and gurgled low as they ran to the neighbour river; owls cried to each other from the Platt. With his eyes trained to the darkness Richard marked small creatures upon the lane. Toads hopped across, and presently there came a hare which passed within a yard of his feet but did not scent him. The man was sad and soon became restless. He moved about a little, went to the bridge and listened to the rustle of the water as it passed beneath. He thought to light a pipe, but did not. And then, very clear upon the prevailing stillness and still far off, he heard the murmur of a motor-car and returned to his hiding-place. The sound grew louder and Richard knew that it must come from no great distance. For forty yards the lane extended without a turn, and presently with abated noise the car crept into sight and two electric eyes blazed suddenly from the distant bend. They amazed the watcher by their brilliance, but they glared straight ahead and he did not expect that any beam would betray him. He was right, for the car passed him and reached the bridge. Then its driver ran on a dozen yards where space admitted turning. He brought it round and then came forward to the bridge again and stopped.

Lifting his head over the edge of the bank the watcher marked Gerald Pye step out. He came into the light and looked at his watch. Then he lit a cigarette and attended to his car. Gerald had driven from London in the previous day, enjoyed a rest at Honiton, some ten miles distant, and left the little town after dark for his destination. Richard found leisure to perceive the lines of the motor and guess at its concealed strength ; it throbbed quietly and Gerald did not stay the engine.

Then came swift feet and the lovers met where Richard was near enough to see their embrace and hear their voices.

‘My own, own Linda!’ said the man. ‘I well knew you’d come.’

And Linda kissed him and answered, ‘Well you knew it, darling!’

‘This little bridge will be the most blessed place in all the earth for evermore,’ he told her, and hugged her to himself for a long time as it seemed to the watcher. But then the young man acted with exceeding promptitude, and while Challice stood soft-hearted, staring at the lovers’ meeting and touched to passing tenderness before it, Gerald put Linda swiftly into the car and handed in the light suitcase that she had brought. He wrapped her snugly and the listener heard him say that they would travel by Salisbury Plain to London and take some breakfast at Salisbury.

‘Curl up and go to sleep, my blessed dear,’ he said. ‘And I’ll wake you again presently.’

Then he shut her in and jumped to the driver’s seat so swiftly that the car was moving before Challice came to his senses, jumped out before it and held up his hand. But he had missed his only chance through abstraction of thought at the critical moment and was now powerless. A mind far quicker than his own saw Richard standing there, recog-

nised him and acted. Gerald did not waste one moment. He turned out his head-lights and made the car bound forward like a springing tiger. He knew that he himself had hidden Richard from his daughter, who was behind him, and she could hear nothing but the roar of the machine. He troubled not as to the consequence and rejoiced that such an unexpected opportunity to turn the tables had been given him. He knew that it would take more than the body of a man to stop the car and dashed ahead in the darkness. Meantime the other had but a moment to realise his danger and strove to get out of the way, but the sudden extinction of the light had bewildered him and he was struck as he tried to jump clear. Linda felt a jolt and heard one inarticulate sound. Five seconds later the head-lights flashed out and the car was running at speed fifty yards from Withy Bridge. She knocked at the glass in front of her, but young Pye took no notice until they were round the bend of the lane and a quarter of a mile upon their way. Then he slowed down, opened the glass and explained.

‘Awfully sorry to give you such a jolt, darling. A pig. The creature ran bang under my wheels, but it was more frightened than hurt, I think.’

In five minutes they had reached the main road and with accelerated speed Gerald set his car for London. Once only he stopped before the dawn, took an electric torch and on some pretext examined the front of the motor. But it showed no sign of what had happened.

Out of his satisfaction at the turn of events there emerged one problem only for young Pye and that was beyond his power to solve. Nothing could have happened to suit him better, or crown the night with triumph more complete, than the destruction of Richard Challice, and Gerald hoped that he had made a clean job of it. In that case Linda’s

father had lived to see his defeat, but that was all. Then nemesis, swift and terrible, had swept him out of the path. But how came he there? What unknown, unguessed failure of the plot had brought it to Richard's ear? And who beside himself were likely to know that he had come? Gerald's instructions to Linda were exceedingly definite and he felt positive that she had obeyed them in every particular for her own sake. He decided to question her as to the past at a future time without enlightening her as to what had happened. Nor did he fear that she would learn it from others. His own moves were such that none could reach Linda in future until he chose they should do so. Immense pains had been taken by him and no detail disregarded; but these precautions, destined only for the disappearance of Linda, were now doubly valuable. They had flashed through his mind as he strove to destroy her father and he knew that they must amply suffice to conceal the truth. But time and reflection caused him to regret the appearance of Challice at that moment. At worst the law could prove nothing save an accident; but Gerald thought upon his own father with whom he had no desire seriously to quarrel. That aspect of the situation disturbed him for a while. In any case his own skin was safe and he might presently discover that Linda would be able to give reasons for her father's presence at Withy Bridge, though she need never know that he had actually been there.

Meantime long hours of the night passed slowly where the stricken body of Richard Challice lay huddled in a water-table beside the roadway. He had enjoyed not a moment to think, nor yet time to escape, but he had not met the full impact of the car and been struck only on his right side as he leapt to get out of the way. The thing had crashed into him and flung him head first to the ground, and while

the blow did untold injury, it had not killed him. His head was gravely hurt as well as his body and hour after hour he lay quite insensible.

Unconscious among unconscious things he remained with a rillet of water lapping at his side. Once during the night a fellow-man came near him but knew it not. Constable Nicholas Tidy on his nocturnal round rode slowly down the lane, but the light on his bicycle shone straight ahead and his thoughts were abstracted so that he did not mark the inert body hidden under the hedge-side darkness.

Thus Richard existed between life and death until dawn, when light began to gild the valley, birds moved, fish rose and broke the surface of the stream. A roaming horse wandered down the lane, smelt at the human lump in the hedge, started and galloped away. There came the call of pheasants on the other side of the brook and a beading otter set a row of bubbles breaking in the water. Colour began to creep back into the world. Wild flowers glimmered white and yellow in the hedge above Richard. Then came a man on foot and found him.

It was Saul Date on his way to a harvest job, and thinking the fallen man dead, he hesitated awhile before taking action. If Challice were dead, then Saul could do nothing and might as well leave the body for someone to find with more leisure. He was already pressed for time and three miles remained for him to walk before he reached his work. But a prospect of being in the news attracted him and he hesitated. He knelt down by the prone object, thrust his hand under Richard's shirt and found him warm. A possibility that he still lived decided Saul and he turned and started to run back to the village. To the constabulary station he came with his news, told how Richard lay in a ditch by Withy Bridge, still showing some evidence of life, and led two policemen

back with him. Nicholas Tidy, his vigil ended, was gone to bed.

They brought a stretcher after sending a telephone message for the doctor and then set out for Withy Bridge. A young man arrived two minutes after them in his motor-car and directed them. Dr. Thorpe found the sufferer alive, but badly injured. The extent of his hurts he could not there determine, so they got the unconscious man upon the stretcher and carried him back to the village.

It was half-past six when they brought him to Church Cottage and Ivy Challice and her boys had just risen and descended, unaware of any ill-fortune. For Richard was often up and away before they came down.

The doctor swiftly found that his resources were unequal to the case. He did what he might and explained to Richard's wife that his hurts were grievous and that their only hope lay in the city. He fortified the sufferer's heart, declared that there was plenty of life in him and then telephoned for an ambulance from the vicarage close at hand to the great hospital five miles distant.

Chaos in the sick man's home followed his return to it, but he remained quite unconscious and did not hear the hard words spoken over his battered body. His mother came to him as soon as she could put on her clothes, and she it was, before they knew the truth, who jumped at it and associated the tribulation with Ivy's daughter. She linked Richard's disaster with Linda after she heard from the police that he had been knocked down by a motor-car at Withy Bridge; and when she knew that Richard was on the brink of death, she turned screaming at Ivy while passion winged her words. The wife was shaken, but acted true to character and showed no great emotion or shed a tear. She talked to the doctor when he returned.

‘God’s ways are awful hard, sir,’ she said quietly, ‘and His plans hidden from us. This had to be, no doubt, but only He knows why.’

Then Verity yelled at her.

‘Get out of my sight, you canting image!’ she cried. ‘If you’d brought up your damned daughter right, this would never have overtook my son. She’s at the bottom of this and that cursed rogue she fell for.’

‘Don’t—don’t, Grandmother!’ cried Samson Challice; but Ivy did not answer. She sighed, turned to Leonard and wiped his eyes, for he was weeping.

Then appeared Simon Pye and stood at the door and asked for Richard.

He came at an apt moment to support the old woman, though as yet quite unaware of all that had happened. Mrs. Butters had made bold to call him at eight o’clock, which was an hour earlier than usual; but, missing Linda, had entered her room to find the evidences of flight. All was very neat and tidy, but a cupboard stood open and various photographs and trifles had disappeared from their places. She wandered round the house calling, then guessed that the girl was sped and wakened Mr. Pye.

The first thing to greet Simon when he came into his dwelling-room was a letter upon the mantel-shelf before the face of the clock. It was directed to Richard Challice and confirmed his growing fears. At once he started to Church Cottage, heard of the accident and gave the letter to Ivy.

‘Your husband cannot read it,’ he said, ‘but under the circumstances you will be justified in doing so.’

Then he turned away and stood outside the house until he might learn what particulars the letter contained, should they desire to tell him.

Ivy opened the letter and read all that her daughter had written to Richard. Then she handed the letter to Verity and went out and spoke to Simon. He heard everything from her and appreciated the position, though a central mystery remained.

‘It looks as though Richard must have known what was going to happen,’ he said, ‘and been upon Withy Bridge to try and prevent it; but how he knew and why he kept his knowledge from me we shall never hear unless he regains his consciousness. Can you throw any light upon that point, Mrs. Challice? If so, it may be well that you should.’

‘None,’ she answered. ‘God’s my judge he never spoke a word to me, and I lay he never spoke a word to his mother either. It was her that turned Dick against Mister Gerald from the first. And if he’d told her, she’d never have let him face up to a young, determined man like your son without somebody to back him. And if I’d known about it, I’d have prayed my husband to come to you.’

He considered this and Ivy went on.

‘Of course, I’d sooner have lost my right hand than Richard,’ she said, ‘but, so far as Linda is concerned, I’m going to be at peace, Mr. Pye. I was never against her marrying Mister Gerald, and I knew from the first he wasn’t a man who would let relations come between her and him, and I knew he always had my girl’s love and trust. And why for not? This doesn’t surprise me very much, and when she knows what has happened, she’ll also know that it was not her fault, nor yet her husband’s. She says in her letter, which I’ll show you, that they ordain to be married as soon as possible; and then I’d say the pair of ’em, knowing they’re safe, will come back.’

He marvelled at her confidence and calm, and he knew

that so far as her daughter was concerned she rejoiced and felt no doubts. Then Verity came out still holding the letter and Mr. Pye took it from her hand and read.

The old woman was only in agony for her son and attached no importance to Linda's communication.

Meantime the doctor sat beside his patient, debated his injuries and perceived that his heart was steady and no immediate threat of death hung over him. But he knew that an operation awaited the sufferer and could not tell the extent of injury to his head beyond the grave concussion that kept him senseless. Richard's breathing was regular but weak.

An ambulance came at last and the local man travelled to Redchester with it. Then, after Richard was gone, a reaction followed. Ivy set about tidying the house place, where he had laid, and Verity grew faint after her rage. Leonard fetched her strong drink. He was unnerved, but Samson kept calm. All turned to Simon and he could not bring himself to leave them immediately. Instead he sat with them and told them of his own purpose, striving to speak hopefully.

'I had a mind to go to London myself at once,' he said, 'and learn how much they could tell me and look after Linda; but that is a slow process and might only end in disappointment. I have the last direction my son gave me, and the first thing is to find out if that is still where they may be found. Everything, so far as he and Linda are concerned, may be as she wrote to her father. We are justified in hoping so much. But I am very anxious indeed, just as you are, Verity, and especially anxious to have good news of them for Richard when he recovers consciousness. As for him, you can be at peace now and know that everything in the power of human skill and science will be done for him.

‘In the meantime,’ he continued, ‘I shall not go to London until I know a little more. There may be things hidden from us at that end. Thorpe could not tell when the accident happened, because, though a doctor may say how long a man has been dead as a result of injuries, he cannot specify the time of the injury so easily if the man is alive. We know, however, from Linda’s letter when she expected Gerald, and it seems clear that Richard was struck down by some terrible confusion in the darkness. One thing is certain. If Linda had known what had happened, nothing on earth would have induced her to leave her father, or I should hope my son either. They are both most certainly ignorant of the accident. Now I shall telephone to a very trusted friend in London and direct him to go at once to Gerald’s address. I shall send no message and do nothing to alarm my son. My friend will merely satisfy himself that Gerald still lives there and make his enquiry with tact. Gerald does not know him and would be none the wiser if he saw him. On learning that he still resides there, I shall go to London at once and inform them of what has occurred. There can be but one instant response to that so far as Linda is concerned, and I feel no doubt that she will return with me instantly on hearing of your terrible trouble. I shall not lose sight of her again. The future must look after itself.’

They did not speak at once, then Verity croaked.

‘You’re wasting your time, Master. They won’t be there,’ she said. ‘Your son would know that my son would seek him instanter and have took very good care to be out of reach.’

‘It may be so, Verity, but let us hope for a happier issue,’ he answered. ‘Linda is not a child, but a woman of strong character. At any rate, you shall hear presently if I go to London.’

'We'll hear in a day or two that they're married—I'm certain sure of that,' said Ivy. 'You must be at rest in your mind, Mother.'

'My mind's with my son,' answered the old woman. 'His child will get what's coming to her whether or no.'

Simon left them then and presently put in a long-distance call to an old friend. He explained the need for instant communication with Gerald but the demand to learn particulars first.

'I want independent information,' he said. Two hours later he was rung up to hear that the necessary enquiry had been made. Gerald Pye had left his rooms a week earlier, with the understanding that he might return to them at the end of the year. His direction was unknown. He had not known it himself when he departed, but promised to send it. Up to the present he had not done so.

When the night came Verity made her grandsons go to Redchester that they might learn news of their father. They returned late and Samson told them. It was at present impossible to speak as to Richard's brain, but his right leg had been amputated and he was unconscious still. Lesser injuries he also suffered from. His condition was dangerous, but his fine constitution supported him. No fatal termination need be feared as yet.

'No fatal termination as yet,' said Leonard over and over again, drawing some melancholy comfort from the words.

Ivy was about to comment upon the tragedy but, when she looked at Richard's mother, changed her mind. She left them and Leonard's tears were a sort of solace to Verity. She spoke at last and uttered a wish dry-eyed.

'Pray God he dies and never comes to no more,' she said. 'That's the best you can pray for your father. Put out the lamp and go to your beds.'

XIII.

HOSPITAL.

There came no news of Linda, but in the course of another four-and-twenty hours a report from Redchester reached Church Cottage. Richard had recovered consciousness, but his weakness was extreme and his life remained in doubt.

Two days later they heard that he might live if no unexpected evil intervened. He was anxious to see his mother, and Dr. Thorpe declared that Verity must go for his peace of mind.

That he should call for her rather than his wife, Granny Challice felt to be a triumph, but she was tender and considerate for her and assured Ivy that Richard's desire might have been expected.

'No call for you to take on and say you're hurt about it,' she declared. 'It's better so. I'm hardened to the sight of a sick bed and you are not. They won't let me bide very long and it ain't easy to see how I can cheer Dick up about Linda; but I'll take his letter and read it to him and talk hopeful. And I can tell him that Mr. Pye's active about it.'

'Be sure to ask him how he came to know she was running away and why he went down to the bridge,' begged Ivy. 'We may be jumping at a wrong conclusion, Mother. Dick may know nothing at all and come by his accident through no act of theirs.'

'I'll do what I may,' promised Verity, 'and if he knows anything he'll tell me.'

When the time came she drove with the doctor to the city in her best clothes. She braced herself for the ordeal and preserved her courage while it lasted; but the shock proved very severe; and though Thorpe had warned her

she must not expect to see Richard as she had last seen him, she had not guessed at all his ordeal meant. She stood beside him and shivered at sight of the shattered ruin that was her son, but she kept her nerve and kissed him and told how they were all looking forward to the good day when he would return home.

‘Thank you for coming, Mother,’ he said. ‘I’m like to be here a parlous long time ; but it’s no odds if she’s safe. Tell about her.’

Verity sat by him and held his hand.

‘I’ve got ten minutes along with you, my dear, and no more,’ she answered, ‘so I mustn’t waste ’em. All’s well at home and they send their love and respects and good wishes. And a lot beside them are asking for you. And as for Linda, she’s left a letter for you.’

‘I’ve read it,’ he said, ‘but read it again if you’ve got your glasses.’

Verity recited the letter and then Dick explained how he came to know the contents.

‘So I ordained to part ’em at the accepted time,’ he added. ‘I was on the bridge to do so and I made a sad mess of it.’

He told his story slowly while his mother listened and did not interrupt between the long pauses. She was sagacious, said no word to waken his emotions and kept her own in control ; but she spoke plainly enough to others on the evening of that day. When he had finished and deplored his line of action, he asked again for Linda.

‘’Tis a week since she went—maybe more, for I’ve lost count of time. She says that we’ll hear tell the moment she’s married ; but you tell me nothing as to that.’

Still considering him, Verity pretended no immediate need for fear.

‘We must be patient,’ she said. ‘We must keep up our hearts, Dick, and hope on.’

‘I don’t hope much,’ he told her. ‘In the light of that night I take a very black outlook upon it. He tried to kill me, Mother—an awful thing to say against a fellow-creature—but how else can you read it? Don’t tell his father that. It would be most enough to kill Mr. Pye to know such a thing. There they were—just a pair of young lovers—and I held back like a fool and never saw till too late that once they got in the car I was done. Please God I’m wrong, however.’

‘Put it out of your mind, Richard,’ she begged. ‘Don’t dwell upon that. Think on nothing but your health yet awhile. I lay we’ll bring you good news very soon.’

She was glad to leave him, for her own fortitude had spent itself.

‘I’ll bring Ivy to see you the next time I come,’ she promised, ‘and all the news, Dick. Take in every mouthful of food they offer you, and keep your mind so peaceful as you know how, my son.’

She kissed him again and marvelled to note the stalwart bulk of him so shrunk and shrivelled. It was not only the loss of a limb: the whole man appeared but a shell of himself. His face had fallen in, the expression of his eyes was different. A grey and haggard mask had taken the place of the old, cheery countenance.

The doctor brought Granny home, but he was called to see her again sooner than he expected. She told Ivy and her grandsons all there was to tell and accused Gerald Pye of attempted murder. She was very excited and overwrought and she collapsed after nightfall, so that Leonard had to seek the doctor.

Verity recovered in a couple of days, but was ordered to

keep quiet and not return to Redchester for the present. Ivy, therefore, went to see Richard alone and remained for half an hour with him. She gasped when she saw him, though warned by his mother what to expect, but for her there persisted through their interview the sensation that she talked with a stranger. Voice, body, mind—none belonged to the Richard she knew.

Ivy was discomposed by this painful experience, but showed no outward sign of it. At the back of her mind she asked herself how the future must shape, for she knew that profound changes would need to be faced. Richard, however, was not concerned with anybody but Linda, and upon that subject she strove to be cheerful and pretend a hope now nearly extinguished.

‘Mr. Pye can’t find ’em for the minute,’ she said, ‘else he’d go to ’em and not leave ’em till they was man and wife. But for my part, Dick, I’d say he was sure to find ’em married already. We’ve had our bad luck and we’ve got to mind that Linda isn’t anybody’s fool. There’s a lot we don’t understand yet, my dear, and I never, never will believe any fearful thing was meant against you. I’ll swear to God that when they dashed off, they never saw you, nor thought of you, nor knew what they had done, for Linda most surely didn’t know, and the young man ain’t a born devil whatever else he is. They’re selfish, like all young things, and have forgot to send the news—that’s all.’

But Richard won no comfort from these opinions.

‘Linda would never have forgot to write the moment they was joined up,’ he said. ‘She knows me and she knows what it meant to me—and you too, Ivy. But most like she ~~wouldn’t~~ wouldn’t have the heart to write if she’s gone to him unwed.’

Such a possibility did not shock Mrs. Challice in the least, but she pretended otherwise. It had indeed an ugly side

enough, because it meant that her hope for Linda's future must collapse, but only from that angle did the event trouble her. She took a high hand, however.

‘If that was to happen, I'd never have her inside my house again, Dick,’ she vowed. ‘Such shame as that would be a nail in my coffin—and in yours, if I know you.’

He was fretful.

‘I ought to be on my feet,’ he said, ‘or on the one foot I've got left to me. I ought to be traapsing all London for her by now. Don't Mr. Pye know the way to find 'em?’

‘We'll live in hopes,’ she answered. ‘Your great gift of hope will help you now, I shouldn't wonder, Dick.’

‘Linda's all I want,’ he replied. ‘Let her come back and I'll stand up to life so well as ever I did. And don't you dare say my door's closed against her. If she was the hottest harlot ever, I'm still her father.’

‘Keep calm and don't do nothing to throw yourself back,’ she begged. ‘I'll give Mother your love, Richard, and say you find yourself to be mending. That will do her good anyway.’

‘Tell her to come when she can. I'm here for a month of Sundays yet by all accounts. And beg Mr. Pye to look me up next week. By then maybe there will come news.’

‘So there may be,’ she answered, ‘and the moment it comes I'll let you hear tell.’

On her way home Ivy recollected her mother-in-law's words, freely uttered, and for once felt inclined to agree with the old woman.

She reflected in her calm way over what she had seen and heard.

‘I wouldn't say but his mother weren't right,’ she thought. ‘Better he'd died and never come to. I've lost the husband I knew. He won't be no husband to me no more. He's

gone so far as I'm concerned. Almost turns me to think of it.'

She was not turned, but she entered a bar and drank two glasses of port wine before she went home in the local omnibus.

Simon Pye paid his visit to Richard at the earliest opportunity, sat for an hour with him and saw him drink his tea. He found the sick man clear in mind and better than he expected. He was comparatively free of pain and only concerned with the future. Indeed, his thoughts took a rational turn, much to the visitor's satisfaction, for Simon always felt most at home amid abstract reflections and principles nowadays. They spoke of Linda first and Mr. Pye was not able to throw any light.

'I am engaged in searching for them,' he said, 'and hope every day to get some news. The time must seem immeasurably long to you, Richard ; but it is not so very long really. Your mother believes that Linda will most surely write very soon, and she is positive, as I am, that the girl has no knowledge whatever concerning what has happened. I cling to the hope that my son was ignorant too ; but in the light of what you told Mrs. Challice, I fear it is hard for you to believe that.'

Richard shook his head.

'I know different, Master,' he answered, and then fell silent.

'What do they say about your head, Richard ?' asked Simon presently. 'After such a terrible blow you mustn't think too much, though you do think so wisely. You mustn't put any great strain on your thinking parts yet awhile.'

'I haven't heard 'em say anything as to that,' answered Dick. 'My head gets tired now and again and I do a lot

of sleeping and I'll dream a bit, which I never remember happening to me before. Queer dreams—all a jumble and mostly about my mother and father.'

Mr. Pye would sometimes change his literary gleanings into the vernacular when talking with the folk, and on Richard's account he did so presently while the sick man drank his tea.

'I read remarkable modern books sometimes and find many remarkable things in them to throw light on us,' he said. 'So much has yet to be found out, Dick, to explain our natures. They say now that we've all got dark horses hid in our secret stables and often never know it till the brutes break loose to savage us, or other people, and work untold evil.'

'Don't make it no better for us if it is so,' said Richard.

'But helps us to feel the cause of many evil effects.'

'How one vicious, headstrong young man could do bad deeds that don't stop with himself, you mean?' asked the sufferer.

'Yes—and wreck the lives of his betters and bring misery on innocent people that never did him anything but good.'

'The bill often goes to the wrong account,' said Richard.

'Not in business I grant you, but in real life.'

'The "subconscious" they call it,' continued Simon, interested in his own thoughts. 'The subconscious breaks loose in this awful way, like a sleeping volcano bursting into life; but granting such an idea, it's a strange fact to me that everything lurking in the subconscious part of us is evil apparently. No virtues or hopeful possibilities are hidden there. Everything is vile. The "subconscious" seems to be a sink of depravity peopled with fierce monsters better dead. But why should not this menagerie possess some useful and even valuable beasts? Many animals set us a good

example by their dignity and patience and devotion, so why should not these remnants from our ancestors have a bright side too ? ’

Such speculations were altogether beyond Mr. Challice.

‘For God’s sake, let me know the instant moment you hear tell anything,’ he begged. ‘That’s all can matter to me now. Once I hear Linda’s safe I’ll get well to surprise ’em.’

Simon promised.

‘Trust your mother as I do,’ he said. ‘She’s certain that we’ll hear something any day, and she’s had a marvellous understanding in this matter altogether beyond my power to explain. She was right as far as I can see and she understands Linda.’

When Simon returned home and visited Church Cottage, that he might bring them the latest news, he learned that Verity’s prophecy was come true. A letter had arrived from Ethelinda. It was directed to her father, but Ivy had opened and read it.

(To be continued.)

A FRONTIER INCIDENT.

BY AWAL BAY.

The author of this true story is an Afridi, of the Malik Din Khel : the actual names of the English officers concerned have been deleted, and the punctuation and some of the spelling and a few obvious little mistakes amended—for the rest his work is in the form in which it was submitted as an English essay to the Principal of Islamia College, Peshawar. The author, as far as is known, received nothing out of the Government award.]

ON the 9th August, 1934, it was a fine morning, clear and warm ; the scent of flowers seemed unusually sweet and strong ; everything was amazingly still except for a few birds singing here and there. I was sitting in our *hujra* (village common room) and chatting with people. All at once we heard the drone of engines—a sound once heard always recognised—which broke the uncanny silence. Gazing up in the sky, to our great surprise, we saw five aeroplanes, which had lost their regular formation of V, passing over the heart of Maidan.

Sound of bullets was heard from all places around us in Maidan. Tirah, eighty miles away from Peshawar, populated by the Afridi tribesmen, is situated to the south-west of Landi Kotal and north-east of Kurram. Its close neighbours on the east come under the control of the British Government, those on the west under the Afghan Government. The tribesmen are not under the sway of any government. Every man, small or great, carries with him one or other form of a rifle. Practically the whole of Tirah got busy in

firing on the aeroplanes. In spite of constant firing by the people, the pilot—at that time not known to me—managed to fly his machine, though with difficulty, to the Bootan Pass, which is surrounded on either side by ridges of hills. His machine appeared to be twisting and turning as if endeavouring to elude its invaders. It was shuffling like a giddy man who is under the influence of alcoholic drink. Ultimately it could not help falling down. There was a horrible crackling sound. The next moment it dropped earthwards near Ganda Tiga—dirty stone—in the Bootan Pass, at an unbelievable speed. Attempts after attempts were made by the pilot of another 'plane to find out the situation of the crashed machine and to ascertain whether the occupants of the crashed machine were alive or dead. He lowered his machine to such an extent as if it were picking up the occupants of the smashed machine. He let red light (or at least it appeared to me).

Now the whole watching Tirah burst into one long, loud roar of acclaim as 'the terror that flieth in the air' came crashing to earth. None of us, I believe, spared a thought for the brave man who came down in the machine. I rushed upstairs and noticed that men, women and children were running as if they were attending a big promised *tamasha*.

Sure as I was that the occupants of the machine must have perished, still I considered it my duty to go to them and help them if they were alive. I armed myself and, taking my rifle, went there with two of my relatives without the permission of my parents. The Bootan Pass, where the accident had happened, was two miles away from my home. Being a Malik Din Khel, it was very difficult to step in the territory of that tribe. After solving the difficulty of entering the Kambar Khel tribe, another restriction was to be removed.

‘How I will go to the home of Awal Khan Bootani where the injured gentlemen were lying.’ Anyhow, I managed to go to the home of Awal Khan through the influences of a Kambar Khel relative of mine who was there.

The two Flying Officers were lying in the *hujra* (club-room) of Awal Khan, devoid of any decoration, which was full to the brim with a crowd. ‘Hallow, how do you do.’ I shook hands with one of the officers, whom I will call Mr. X., who was lying in a *charpai* (bed) and who appeared to me as if he was quite hopeless of life. Seeing me, a gleam of joy ran through his face. ‘I am terribly suffering. Do you know English?’ ‘Yes, I know English. I have come to help you,’ I replied. I found that he was not too badly injured. Then I proceeded to the *charpai* of the other officer, whom I will call Mr. Z., who was lying calm and quiet and semi-conscious, looking to me with a smiling face through one eye. His wounds were severe, therefore he was in great agony. I talked to them, cheered them up, and assured them of their safety, which relieved them a good deal.

With the first smash of the machine, his right hand being broken, he could not unfasten his body from the straps. Therefore all other injuries than his hands were sustained to him while the machine was rolling down the slope of the hill. It was through sheer luck that the machine stopped just on the top of a deep precipice. Had the plane moved two yards onward, there would have been the end of everything. Mr. X. came out of the machine and ran in order to escape—though escaping was impossible. While he was running, he was fired at three times by a fanatic who was cutting wood near by. The fanatic did not want to kill him, but wanted to stop him.

I think Flight-Lieutenant Z. would have not received other

injuries than his hand if X., instead of running, had helped him in unfolding his straps.

But X. is excusable on every ground, because, under such abnormal circumstances, it is very difficult to act coolly. There was the question of life and death.

Flight-Lieutenant Z. was brought in a *charpai* from Ganda Tiga to the house of Awal Khan and X. walked. In Tirah no modern medical relief is available. Diseases are treated by quacks. The people were killing a sheep so that the skin may be worn by the wounded persons, because the skins and hides of animals like sheep, goats and calves are considered to be a panacea for every disease. I resisted the people from this idea by telling them that a skin may do good to you, but it will not do any good to these English people.

It has been pointed out there were no facilities for proper medical aid. But there happened to be a medical practitioner—an outlaw of the Afghan Government—twelve miles away. I sent for this doctor. The people being conservative, they did not like the idea. Then I made them understood in these words, 'Look here, the condition of these people is precarious. In the absence of a doctor Flight-Lieutenant Z. is liable to death. You need not bother for money. I will pay the doctor's fees.' Then they agreed, and I at once sent my man to the doctor.

It became evening, the night was fast approaching. The crowd in the club-room, which was constituted of the Khamhar Khel tribe, began to look upon me with an aggressive attitude. They were talking among themselves, 'Our own Afridi has turned infidel owing to his English education.' Ultimately they could no longer bear to allow me to remain in their *hujra* with the injured persons. They told me at the end definitely to leave their place. As it was night, I could go neither home nor stay with them. I passed the night in a

neighbouring mosque which was forsaken. Before leaving Mr. Z. and X., how anxiously X. asked me not to leave them. 'I will come again,' I told him.

Early in the morning, on the 10th, I went to Malik Niaz Mohommed, who is the chief of that tribe—Kambar Khel. One in the normal state of health cannot imagine the pains and troubles which Flight-Lieutenant Z. underwent on that night. I told the Malik that either give them to me so that I may take them to my home in Malik Din Khel, or remove them to your own house instead of leaving them in Awal Khan's house. He agreed to the latter proposal. Thanks to the great sympathy and kindness of the Political Agent of Kurram Agency and his wife, a compounder (= dispenser) and Mullah Abdur Rahman and a servant with first-aid outfit, brandy essence, biscuits and tinned soup, were sent to Tirah. They reached Bootan at 7 a.m. on the 10th August.

Putting them in *charpais*, we started from Awal Khan's house to Malik Niaz Mohd's house, which was normally for one and half hour's walk. When we took out the *charpais* from Awal Khan's home, he again went on his words and did not want that these wounded persons should be removed from his home to Malik Niaz Mohd's home. We placed the *charpai* in a low-lying place. Relations on the question of removing the injured persons grew strained. Awal Khan's party did not allow us. The members of each party drew the bolts of their rifles and were prepared to fire at each other. Thank heaven that ultimately Awal Khan agreed.

The path that led from Awal Khan's house to Malik Niaz Mohd's home was very hazardous. It could hardly allow a man to pass through the *nullah* that was made up by the constant flow of water. Now the path was overgrown with

bushes. There was great possibility of the slipping and falling down of the men carrying the *charpais*. How very often Flight-Lieutenant Z. used to ask me 'How long is the journey?' 'Not very long, sir,' I replied. Anyhow, we reached our destination, the house of Malik Niaz Mohd, at 10 a.m. We found the house of Malik Niaz Mohd more comfortable. The compounder and I and Mullah, on reaching the house of Niaz Mohd, instantly began to wash his wounds and then dressed them up, although they were not properly dressed up, because all the necessary things like planks, etc., were not available there. All the people were entertained and fed by the Malik. We had placed the *charpais* in a verandah; the people were sitting outside. The Malik prepared tea and half-boiled eggs and butter, and chickens which were forthwith brought up. Each took two or three eggs and a few biscuits. Later on, green tea was brought up. I served all these things personally, because the other people did not know how to serve them. From the home of Niaz Mohd Khan I wrote a report in English to the Political Agent of the Kurram Agency about the situation of the sahib.

Now there came the question of the removal of the sahibs to the administrative area. Mullah Abdur Robman Orakzai was sent up by the Kurram Agency with the instructions that the sahibs should be brought through to Khankai Bazaar, but the Afridis did not agree to this proposal. They argued that 'As we belong to the Khyber Agency, so we must take them to our own P.A. (of the Khyber Agency) because we were responsible for our P.A. and not for that of the Kurram Agency P.A.' But the real fact was that the way to the Khankai Bazaar was shorter than the journey to Peshawar. The sahibs also wanted to go via Khankai. I asked the Malik about this question. I said to him that 'The

distance to Khankai was far shorter than the distance to Peshawar, so neglecting our own interest, we must carry them to Khankai.' But the Malik, in consultation with other Maliks and public, turned a deaf ear to this proposal. He told me, 'You are an Afridi, belonging to the Khyber Agency; how can you dare propose to carry them via Khankai Bazaar, which is not under the influences of our Political Agent?' The other Malik Pir Noor told me that 'You are still a child, you don't know about politics, but you will learn things gradually.' I told Flight-Lieutenant Z. : 'They don't agree to our proposal. We musn't bother ourselves about that, we will reach Peshawar quite safely and all right.'

We hired thirty-six porters, who were active and swift, sixteen for one *charpai* and twenty for the other. We launched on our downward journey to Peshawar at 2 p.m. on the 10th of August. I attached myself to the *charpai* of Flight-Lieutenant Z., and retired Subadar Bahadur Sher to Mr. X.'s *charpai*, in order to look after them and direct the porters. We hardly had covered a mile distance when it began to drizzle. Rainfall is a very common feature in Tirah from June to October. After covering seven and a half miles, we reached Bagh, the famous trade centre of Tirah where a fair is held on every Friday. We made a short halt in order to rest and relieve the coolies. The people were returning from the fair with their purchases. After a short halt again, we resumed our journey. The way in Dawa Toi (two rivers) was narrow, rough and uneven, but it was a short one. We reached, at 8 p.m., the same date, viz. 10th, the home of Malik Tabbar Khan, the nephew of Malik Mohd Zaman Khan, after covering nineteen miles. This was a decent place; everybody felt quite at home there. All the people were entertained with tea and then food in a decent way. After dressing the sahibs, tea was brought in

a beautiful tea-set and then meal was served to the sahibs. Among the guests we three were the last to take our meal. I went to bed at twelve o'clock. During this night Flight-Lieutenant Z. had some sleep.

The next day, on the 11th August, after taking tea and meal, I thanked the kind host on behalf of the sahibs, and then set out at 8 p.m. for the second day's journey to Peshawar. Our way lay through smooth and even places. We walked our way practically with no great difficulty. At Toll Mela we called a halt, between Bazaar and Bara Valley, in order to quench our thirst and rest. A man from among the people gave cucumber to Flight-Lieutenant Z., who had brought it in his sack from Tirah. At Toll Mela I wrote a letter to the wife of the P.A. of Khyber Agency, requesting her that she may kindly inform Major Y., who had gone to Khankai Bazaar, because he expected us to go through Khankai Bazaar, that we are coming to Peshawar. We resumed our journey after an hour's rest at Toll Mela and had no difficulty in our way except crossing through the gap of Mangal Bagh Kandow—the line of demarcation between Bara and Bazar. After crossing Mangal Bagh Kandow, we entered into the territory of Zakka Khel tribe, a very notorious tribe which has always been a source of trouble to the innocent travellers who walk through their territory. They spare no one, even the tribesmen, if they chance to cross their country. He will be looted on the way if he cannot put a strong front to them. Though we were too strong for them, yet we took full precautions against any possibility of an attack by these people. At one o'clock we stopped in the Bazaar for tea, which was quickly supplied by our Zakka Khel host. It may be mentioned that though Zakka Khel are notorious for dacoity and looting, they have good qualities too. They are very hospitable.

We started at two o'clock from Bazaar and saw, on our way to Jabgai, one aeroplane making a buzzing noise, high up in the sky, in order to mark the place where we were. In our march we were terribly suffering from thirst and hunger. (*Note.*—For the convenience of the reader, I should like to point out that in the tribal territory there are no wayside shops or hotels where food could be had. But that does not mean that food is not available. What I mean is that food cannot be purchased. You cannot dare to pay the price : if you ask for the price of food, you will be laughed at. You will be entertained with food and tea, free of charge, wherever you put up for the night. The tribesmen are, no doubt, of a very hospitable nature. Wherever you go, you may be quite a stranger knowing no one, but you will get your meal and lodging free of charge.)

In order to drink water and refresh ourselves, we halted at Jabgai at 6 p.m. Here there is a stream of water flowing in a verdure. All the people drank water with their hands. But the difficulty arose how Flight-Lieutenant Z. will take the water. I asked a boy for the water-bowl, which he gave me. But when he knew that I was giving water to an Englishman, he hesitated and again took his cup from me. I persistently requested him for the cup, but my request produced no effect upon him. Malik Mohd Zaman Khan also asked him for the cup, but the boy did not agree. After gazing upon me for a moment, he said to me in utter surprise, 'Are you Muslim ?' 'Yes, I am, and your own Afridi,' I replied. 'Can't be ; impossible,' he cried out. When our entreaties failed to get the cup, I produced a four-anna piece to him and told him, 'All right, the price of your cup is no more than annas two, but I offer you annas four for the same.' Enraged as he became upon me, 'Do you hold me

for a Bazaari man ? I am not going to give it to you at all. Do you think that I have no shame and decorum ? ' he said. Then I told the boy, ' There is no harm if they drank water in it. After drinking water in it, scrub it. I have never seen such a man who refuses things to guests.' Hearing the name of guests, the boy agreed to give us his cup. Of course, this was an extreme case.

We started at 6.30 from Jabgai to our next stage, Chura, which is nine miles from Ali Masjid. The night was fast approaching. The shadows of the evening were lengthening. It grew pitch dark. We were terribly exhausted, because the journey from Khayast Khula (the mouth of beauty), the home of Jabbar Khan, was at least fifty miles. I was simply trudging, not walking in a proper way. We reached Chura with great difficulty, at 10.30 p.m. on the 11th. Chura is a beautiful small valley nine miles away from Ali Masjid. It belongs to my tribe Malik Din Khel. Our Maliks live here, because in time immemorial their ancestors were drawn out from Tirah on account of their irresponsible nature to the public. Now they have settled down here and find themselves quite at home. We stayed at the fort of Malik Ayub Khan who himself was not present there. Arrangements on the whole were not at all satisfactory. After serving a meal to the sahibs at about midnight of the 12th and dressing their wounds I began to write letters to the P.A., Assistant Political Officer, and Political Tehsildar, informing them of our safe arrival at Chura. I sent these letters by hand through a Khassadar (= a tribesman employed by Government to patrol roads through tribal territory), who had come to Chura for our halt.

We are very thankful to our host who brought us a gramophone for our amusement, a gramophone which I think was manufactured in the eighteenth century. Its

music, instead of appealing to our soul, bored us, therefore we stopped it.

Mr. X. had already slept, but Flight-Lieutenant Z. went to sleep at 3 a.m. of the 12th. We again got up at 4 a.m. and began preparation for our next day's journey. I doubt whether Flight-Lieutenant Z. could sleep that night. He had a long weary night.

After dressing the sahibs, we marched on our journey at 5.25 a.m. on the 12th August, to Rakmal, which is only nine miles away from Chura. The journey from Chura to Rakmal was very quick and very smooth because the way was broad enough to allow the porters to walk abreast. We reached Rakmal at 7.30 a.m., where Major Y., along with other Political Officers, a Medical Officer and Officers of the R.A.F., were awaiting us anxiously with an ambulance and cars. The wounded gentlemen were at once taken in the ambulance lorry to the British Medical Hospital, Peshawar; the tribesmen remained in Ali Masjid. Thus there came the separation which is inevitable.

Each tribesman was given a rupee for his food on the 12th at Ali Masjid. On the 13th a big Jirga was held at Landi Kotal with the Political Agent, in which the tribesmen requested the P.A. that the Government should kindly comply with some of their very serious grievances which are as follows :

1. The Government may kindly vacate Kajouri Plain as it was promised. We assure the Government that we will behave properly. The so quickly rescuing the British Officers and such wide-shown sympathy of the Afridis bear witness to the loyalty and fidelity of the Afridis.

2. The other was a minor one. It was in connection with the release of some tribesmen prisoners.

3. The stopping of unnecessary flying, especially of too much low flying, of the aeroplanes.

The P.A. listened to them and told them that the Government will take it into consideration. Then at the end, H.E. the Governor of N.W.F.P. very kindly sanctioned Rupees 10,000 as reward for and expenses for the recognition of their loyal services.

It should be borne in mind that this amount was not given only to Afridis who are comprised of eight tribes, viz. 1. Malik Din Khel, 2. Kambar Khel, 3. Zakka Khel, 4. Aqa Khel, 5. Kamar Khel, 6. Sepai Khel, 7. Kuki Khel, and 8. Upper Adam Khel, but also to the other tribesmen like Shinwari, Shalmani and Mohmands if there were any at all. In dividing the reward among all the tribesmen, the policy of the Government is to offer a sort of temptation which will prevent people from committing things which are contrary to the interest of the Government. I think with the exception of Bootan, where the accident had taken place, the remaining people hardly got money enough to cover their expenses which they had incurred.

There is no denying the fact that this is the first time that an Englishman has received such unprecedented sympathy at the hands of the Afridis. I really feel astonished how quickly he was brought to the administered territories. Another thing which struck me mightily was the calm and serene attitude of Flight-Lieutenant Z. He could not have borne the accident with better grace. His courage and patience have been more than admirable.

Islamia College, Peshawar.

‘SEE-SAW “MA-LI-LI-LAW.”’

BY W. A. DONALDSON.

FROM the nursery of Mrs. Dale’s home, on The Peak, Hong-Kong, came the happy strains of a well-known English nursery rhyme. Very softly it was being crooned by a middle-aged Cantonese amah, for the special benefit of her little charge—Mrs. Dale’s golden-haired, blue-eyed, two-year-old son, Ian.

Though the pronunciation of the rhyme was being quaintly orientalised, the intonation was unmistakable, and through the warm, still air, made tolerable by the gentle waving of a punkah overhead, there came the words :

‘See-saw “Ma-li-li-Law,”
*Jenny has got a new masta.
 She sall have but a penny a day,
 ’Cause she can’t work any fasta.*

‘More, more, more,’ lisped the joyous Ian, and again and again his good-natured amah patiently complied.

At the nursery door Mrs. Dale smilingly paused, happy to know that her amah was so admirably adapting herself to the care of the little one. She had been in Mrs. Dale’s service before the arrival of the now rapidly growing youngster, and she had, with her mistress, been looking forward eagerly to what was now taking place in the nursery.

Mrs. Dale could not refrain from peeping into the room to behold the scene.

In the blaze of the golden sunshine—so seldom far away

from Hong-Kong, an island indescribably beautiful at all seasons of the year, and even at night, when it is lit up with what seem to be myriads of lights, with the sombre Peak in the background and ten square miles of harbour water glistening far below—Mrs. Dale saw her darling little son gazing fondly into the amah’s eyes. He appeared to be as surprised as he was delighted to hear her sing that which sounded to him so charming and which, in his dawning consciousness, seemed to stir up something latent in his nature.

So happy were they both in their Marjory Dawe rhyme that neither was aware of Mrs. Dale’s presence until she said quietly :

‘ You sing that very nicely, amah.’

‘ You likee, Missy ? ’

‘ Yes ; and our little boy seems to like it too.’

‘ Yes, Missy, he all time likee me sing to him, and I likee sing too. Velly nicee English baby song.’

‘ Is there anything like such rhymes for Chinese babies ? ’

‘ No, Missy. We sing to them of the wind and the rain and the clouds—velly, velly old Chinese songs. Something like saying this, Missy :

*‘ Up in the sky clouds float, float swiftly by.
They lookee down on us from glate, glate heights.
But sun and moon and clouds, though up so high,
Smile sweetly to us as they pass by.’*

‘ That too is very sweet,’ said Mrs. Dale. ‘ But how came you to know the English of it, Ah Ling ? ’

‘ My last Missy’s masta was at Hong-Kong big school. He taught it to me. I love it and I lemembra. I think I nevva forget.’

‘ Ah, yes ; Mrs. Collinge’s husband, of the University

staff. He is a sinologue and something of a poet,' murmured Mrs. Dale to herself.

'I no savvy, Missy.'

Mrs. Dale smiled. She then said :

'As it is now so very hot I shall sit down by Ian in his play-pen, and you will tell me, I hope, why you now never seem to want to return to your village home in Kwangtung. You remember that you promised you would tell me of your home there ?'

'Yes, Missy, I lemembra. Two weeks evelly year I used to go to my native village, there to help my old fatha with his li-chi ochad. Velly nicee flute li-chi, Missy. You likee ?'

'Yes, Ah Ling, li-chi is one of my favourite Chinese fruits.'

'Plenty velly happy times I used to have with my old fatha on his ochad, Missy.'

'But now you never go there ?'

'Nevva now, Missy. My fatha have changed to anotha world.'

'Oh ! I am sorry to hear that, Ah Ling. And your husband ; what of him ? Do you ever see him ?'

'Nevva now, Missy. I think long time he forget me. He catchee one piecee new wifo and now he has litee son.'

'Ah, that's it, Ah Ling. But surely you once were happy with your husband. You had children but no son. Was that the trouble, eh ? It frequently is in Chinese homes : so I have heard.'

'Yes, Missy, it bling plenty bobelly. First, my litee happy : though I nevva saw my husband nor he me until day we makee mally. That belong Chinese custom. We were just boy and girl : he seventeen, I fifteen. All same wifos of his other blothas, I lived with him and his palents

at their home : and, all same those women, I was his motha’s attendant and servant always—evelly morning velly eally till velly late night-time.’

‘But were you happy ?’ again asked Mrs. Dale.

‘Chinese wifo no expected to be happy : only to give man-child to her husband. He then velly happy because his son play to the spilits after his fatha has changed to anotha world.’

‘A rather one-sided arrangement,’ commented Mrs. Dale smilingly.

‘My no savvy, Missy,’ responded the amah. ‘And so wifo tly bling man-child ; and if no can do she no good, and evellybody say so.’

‘And you had no son, Ah Ling ?’ asked Mrs. Dale, with increasing feminine curiosity.

‘Oh, yes : my catchee one piecee velly nicee litee man-child, in third moon of the fifth year of our mallage. Oh, he velly stlong and suck fast and makee me plenty happy because he smile so sweetly to me and come close, close to my blest always. Inside, my velly, velly walm for him too. My makee love him velly, velly muchee. But he go to anotha world, Missy, and my velly, velly sad.’

‘Oh, poor Ah Ling.’

‘But he no go cliff-side on the hill.’

‘What do you mean, Ah Ling ?’

‘Only my litee girls—all my four litee girls—they go cliff-side. I velly much cly when my husband do that thing, Missy.’

‘You mean, Ah Ling, that your little girls passed away and that they were buried at the cemetery on the cliff-side near the hill ?’

‘Missy, you no savvy ploppa : they no makee die : but my husband no wantchee girl babies : wantchee only man-

child babies. We velly poor : no can keep baby girls. So he took my litee baby girls from me when they were born and I nevva see them again. All poor village peoples do this thing with most of their girl babies. Only wantchee man-child babies in China.'

'How dreadful and horrible, Ah Ling.'

'Yes, Missy, I think so too. When my first baby came we savvy it would be man-child baby : so my husband he makee velly happy. But it was a litee girl baby.'

'And was he very angry ?'

'Velly, velly angly, Missy. At once he took litee baby to cliff-side, and I nevva see her again.'

'And then did your little boy baby come next ?'

'No, Missy, my next baby was litee girl and so also my third and fourth.'

'And what happened to them ?'

'My husband no wantchee them. He took them away from me. I no see my litee girl babies after my women folk help me bling them into the world.'

'How dreadful,' murmured Mrs. Dale.

'Plenty times happen evelly day in China, Missy,' observed the amah philosophically.

'And your heart must have been very sore, Ah Ling ?'

'Yes, Missy. I wantchee keep my little babies ; but we were so velly poor, no can keep.'

'But the authorities—Number one men of your village—had they nothing to say as to what your husband did ?'

'No, Missy, they no savvy. They only savvy "squeeze." They say they wantchee money to keep back rivva watta coming into fields and houses, but evelly year plenty watta comes and the litee they did needs again and again to do—and more plenty money to do it. All same evelly place in China, Missy.'

'A strange country, Ah Ling.'

'It nevva change, Missy.'

'But you were happy with your little son, eh?'

'Yes, Missy, happy, happy, happy, evelly day velly, velly happy. That time my husband was away Shanghai-side as soldierman, and no come back until my litee man-child was six months old. My husband too was velly, velly happy. Then my litee Yuan, he makee sick: velly, velly sick, and I stay with him always evelly day, all night, all through evelly hour, watching and waiting and playing for him to get well again and smile to me. But he velly, velly tired, and he changed his world.'

'And left your world tumbling down upon you in chaos: oh, you poor, poor woman.'

'I no savvy, Missy.'

'My heart is very sore for you, Ah Ling.'

'Missy has kind heart: she savvy plenty what a motha feels about her babies.'

'And after the loss of your little boy, what then, Ah Ling?'

'Nothing more. No more babies come. I play and play to Kwan Yin for one more piecee man-child. I play and play, but Kwan Yin no hear me.'

'Kwan Yin, Ah Ling: ah, that is the Chinese Goddess of Fecundity, I think?'

'I no savvy, Missy.'

'And then, Ah Ling?'

'He no wantchee me any more, my husband. He catchee anotha wifo and I come Hong-Kong-side to be amah.'

'To look after other women's babies, and to mourn your own: poor, poor Ah Ling.'

'Plenty Chinese womans all same my, Missy.'

'But perhaps some day, Ah Ling, you will, as you would say, "catchee" another and a better husband. You are still on the sunny side of forty, I suppose?'

'Yes, Missy, I belong thirty-three; but no Chinese woman mally when so old. No can, Missy. Belong velly bad: no belong ploppa. Evellybody makee laugh.'

'Ah, well, amah, you stay here as long as you wish. You stay here with us, Ah Ling.'

'As long as Missy and Masta and our litee baby boy wantchee my, I can do, Missy.'

'Very well, amah,' said Mrs. Dale, as she moved out of the nursery.

Though drowsy with the heat, the little lad had then said: 'Bye, bye, Mummie,' and, almost in the same breath, 'Sing again, amah: sing again "Ma-li-li-Law."'

And as Mrs. Dale, just before going downstairs, looked back into the sun-flooded nursery, she saw the little fellow snuggle close into his amah's arms and again heard her soft, sweet voice crooning:

'See-saw "Ma-li-li-Law,"
Jenny has got a new masta.
She sall have but a penny a day,
'Cause she can't work any fasta.'

'See-saw "Ma-li-Law,
Ma-li-li-Law."'

'I tink my litee baby boy makee sleepy; eh, Ian?'

'Sleepy, sleepy, amah.'

Then the amah's voice, even softer than before, crooned:

'See-saw "Ma-li-li-Law,
Ma-li-li-li-Law——
Li-li-Law."'

RARE BEN JONSON.

BY A. E. SNODGRASS.

THERE is something rounded and hail-fellow about the very name of Ben Jonson, and indeed he must have been a jovial, Falstaffian figure in those famous taverns, the Mermaid and the Devil, where the contests of wit

‘ Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.’

But our Jove could thunder too, and emit lightnings. He had an eye to threaten and command, and his words were as weighty with solid substance as his body, which nearly turned the scale at twenty stones.

He dubbed himself an Elephant-Cupid and tells us of

‘ His mountain-belly and his rocky face.’

In those hostelries which he patronised, and whose vintages he tasted sometimes with more freedom than wisdom, he was a dictator who ruled with an iron hand, wielding a whip of scarifying wit. Did not Beaumont once remind him ?

*‘ What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid ! Heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtile flame,
As if that every one from whom they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest.’*

Into the literary republic which had its headquarters in the Apollo room at the Devil, Jonson brought a military spirit, and he had to fight scores of wordy battles to maintain

his supremacy. Quarrels with his rivals were bitter and would have overwhelmed a weaker man, but he remained the acknowledged chief of the English world of letters until death took the sceptre from his grasp. If he dealt many resounding blows, he vouchsafed much Samaritan succour. He was loved as tensely as he was hated and feared. His adopted 'sons' worshipped him; those whom he shepherded were nurtured as thoroughly as those without the fold were flagellated. The Neptune of the 'Mermaid' benisoned his followers, but his trident was a fearsome weapon for assailants.

It is no mere speculation or straining at presumptive evidence to lay claim that he was held in this sincere affection. No poet has left behind him in manuscript more unstinted testimonies of personal fondness in the shape of inscriptions and addresses, and on his death a crowd of poets joined in an unparalleled chorus of acclamation to which the volume *Jonsonus Virbius* is a lasting memorial. These tokens, unsought and spontaneous, effectually give the lie to the slander of his enemies that he was all envy, self-sufficiency and uncharitableness.

In an age when tavern life bulked so largely in the social scheme, Jonson was naturally no stranger to mine host, but that he was a persistent, sottish wine-bibber is rebutted by his first trustworthy biographer, Gifford, and by the whole evidence of his prolific pen and his insatiable love of learning. Habitual sacrifices to Bacchus were never the ritual of methodical study and voluminous output.

The rules of his own 'Tavern Academy,' or Apollo Club, which, however whimsical, were honoured in the observance and penalised in the breach, afford further disproof of spiteful allegations, bibulous and otherwise. These 'laws for the Beaux Esprits,' or the 'Tribe of Ben,' were drawn

up by Jonson himself in Latin and were engraven in marble over the chimney in the Apollo room of the Old Devil Tavern at Temple Bar, that being the club chamber. Interpreted in English verse some of the mandates ran :

*' As the fund of our pleasure, let each pay his shot,
Except some chance friend, whom a member brings in.
Far hence be the sad, the lewd fop and the sot :
For such have the plagues of good company been.*

*Let the learned and witty, the jovial and gay,
The generous and honest, compose our free state ;
And the more to exalt our delight whilst we stay,
Let none be debarr'd from his choice female mate.*

*Let's have no disturbance about taking places,
To show your nice breeding, or out of vain pride.
Let the drawers be ready with wine and fresh glasses ;
Let the waiters have eyes, though their tongues must be ty'd.*

*Let the contests be rather of books than of wine.
Let the company be neither noisy nor mute.
Let none of things serious, much less of divine,
When belly and head's full, profanely dispute.'*

Nevertheless—or, perhaps one should say, therefore—our rare Ben, the president of this Bohemian assembly, must many a time and oft have wondered ' what the vintners buy one half so precious as the goods they sell.' In the wonderment a right goodly company shared, his boon companions comprising Shakespeare, Marlowe, Herrick, Michael Drayton, Beaumont and Fletcher.

How one deplores the absence of some earlier Boswell to record these Jonsonian symposia ! The regret acquires added point when we contemplate how many striking resemblances there are, in character and physique, between

Ben Jonson and Dr. Johnson. The same irrepressible bluntness and swift readiness to assail, the same domination and independence. Distinctions? Yes. For one thing Dr. Johnson drank dishes of tea—Ben Jonson tankards of Canary sack. And whereas the doctor garnered a dictionary, Ben Jonson with his fecund quill helped to sow the seeds of the ultimate verbal harvest.

It is 300 years since Ben Jonson died—August 6, 1637. Save by the student and the scholar, he is not read nowadays. He is for the library; not even for the Old Vic. Often there is heard on the wireless that charming old English ballad, a traditional air rescued from oblivion by Quilter, 'Drink to me only with thine eyes.' But how many listeners are aware that the words are Jonson's? Time is ruthless and fame is but a passing rainbow.

He outlived Shakespeare for twenty-one years—to be outlived by a deathless Swan of Avon. Yet his position is sure and firm in the basic structure of things. A pioneer of drama, he laid a foundation upon which others have reared more alluring and durable edifices, but in the mansion of literature many builders are needed and many hands must trim the stones and prepare the material for the façades.

What a variety of experience and adventure he brought to his craftsmanship! His life is instinct with the Elizabethan aura. Student, bricklayer, soldier, traveller, actor, playwright, poet, duellist, classical scholar—these are the divers phases that went to the inspiration of that brief but eloquent epitaph in Westminster Abbey—'O rare Ben Jonson.'

The four words were cut in haste on the rough stone, but no one ever had the temerity—though it was contemplated—to add a syllable. Never was more expressed by one adjective—a career's epitome, as rare a tribute as the word's own purport.

It would appear that Johnstone was his ancestral name, his grandfather being a Scottish gentleman from Annandale who served Henry VIII. Under Queen Mary Ben's father suffered for his creed and was cast into prison and denuded of his estates. Persecution evidently only increased his zeal, for ultimately he entered into holy orders and became 'a grave minister of the Gospel.' He died in the year 1573, a month before Ben was born. Elizabeth had then been fifteen years on the throne.

The infant was christened Benjamin, but the Benjamin was doomed to be abbreviated along with the Johnstone, and to contemporaries he became unequivocally the terse but resonant Ben Jonson he has remained to posterity. It was no mere pen-name, but a complete and all-encompassing adoption.

Ben was a Londoner, born in what is now Northumberland Street, Strand. His widowed mother had a struggle with poverty, and it was not long before she was married again; this time to a master bricklayer whose name has not been reliably traced. Our bricklayer could not have been a harsh man. At any rate, as befitted his trade, he understood foundations, and he certainly laid the foundation of his stepson's fortunes by sending him—or allowing him to be sent—to Westminster School, the nursery of so many poets, Dryden, Cowper and Churchill, for example. Here young Ben came under the ægis of William Camden, then second and afterwards headmaster of the renowned school. Camden stood to Jonson much as John Florio stood to Shakespeare, only in a greater degree, for while Shakespeare attained 'small Latin and less Greek' Jonson climbed to heights of classical knowledge which left his fellow-authors gazing at him from afar. Undoubtedly this was due to Camden's excellent tutorship and to the firm and close friendship

maintained between master and pupil in later life. In his 'Epigrams' Jonson attests the fact :

*'Camden, most reverend head, to whom I owe
All that I am in arts, all that I know. . . .
What name, what skill, what faith hast thou in things !
What sight in searching the most antique springs !'*

It is stated that Jonson went to Cambridge University, but there is no documentary proof of his University residence, though subsequently he graduated Master of Arts at both universities—'by their favour, not his studies,' he told Drummond. Apparently the truth is that his own dogged application and inborn taste, aided and abetted by Camden's guiding hand, were the responsible factors of his breadth and depth of learning.

His studious proclivities suffered many interruptions. On leaving Westminster School his stepfather perceived some affinity between bricks and mortar-boards and he promptly put the lad to his own plebeian trade.

One fine day Ben was using his trowel on the garden wall of Lincoln's Inn, reciting Greek verses the while. A benchman overheard the unaccustomed soliloquy, and talking to this unusual youth and 'finding him of wit extraordinary' befriended him in his studies. Tradition has it that he did this to much practical purpose, and that Ben found another ladder in his educational ascent.

A distinct distaste for bricks was not long in manifesting itself. A horror of the hod drove him to flight, and we next discover him a soldier, fighting in the Low Countries for Maurice of Nassau. He rendered a worthy account of himself in arms, and the experience was food for the creation of the many sham, bombastic soldiers that bestrew his plays and whose actual existence at that time was one of the pests

of society. Pretentiousness he loathed, but he held the profession of arms in no light esteem. Writing of 'true soldiers' he refers to that

'Great profession which I once did prove
And did not shame it with my actions then,
No more than I dare now do with my pen.'

Back in London at the age of twenty-four, the sword having cut out all memories of bricks, Jonson now enlisted himself as an actor in a company of which Shakespeare, nine years his senior, was a member. But mere acting did not satisfy his ambition. Like Shakespeare, probably, he could not achieve the histrionic ideal set forth in Hamlet's advice to the players. So he burnt much midnight oil, and by its lambent aid evolved his most famous comedy, *Every Man in his Humour*.

No one at the theatre thought much of this comedy until Shakespeare cast his discerning eye upon it. It was then produced with marked success, and Jonson was once and for all put on his feet as a recognised author. Shakespeare acted in the play, and thus began a lifelong friendship. Stories of Jonson's jealousy of Shakespeare are mere venomous inventions out of the same hell-brewed cauldron that the other defamations issued.

Every Man in his Humour was first acted in 1598. Besides Shakespeare the chief players were Richard Burbage, the original interpreter of the greater number of Shakespeare's heroes, and John Heminges and Henry Condell, those devoted friends who saved for futurity so many of the Shakespearean plays by giving us the First Folio.

In the midst of his dramaturgic triumph Jonson—never prone to peace—became involved in a feud with an actor, Gabriel Spenser, whom he killed in a duel in Hogsden

Fields. He was tried at the Old Bailey for this disastrous exploit and sent to prison, but was soon released with no further penalties than the forfeiture of his goods and chattels (doubtless scanty enough) and a brand on his left thumb.

It was not his only acquaintance with prison. Once he consigned himself to gaol voluntarily as an earnest of sympathy with fellow-authors who were indicted for reflections on the Scotch in a comedy, *Eastward Ho*, to which he had contributed. A Scottish gentleman, Sir James Murray, high in James I's favour, laid a complaint. Chapman and Marston, the main authors, were arrested, and Jonson, though not responsible for the offending passage, imprisoned himself with them.

The affair ended happily enough, but there was tragedy underlying, and herein we get a glimpse of his mother's devotion. When all concerned were released, Jonson gave a banquet, attended by Camden, Selden, and others. It had been reported that the prisoners were to have their ears and noses cut, and

'in the midst of the feast'—as Jonson himself told the story to Drummond—'his old mother drank to him and showed him a paper which she had intended (if the sentence had been decided upon) to have mixed in the prison among his drink, which was full of lusty strong poison, and that she was no churl, she told him, she minded first to have drunk of it herself.'

Scarcely a year later (1605) Jonson was imprisoned for some offence in a play not identified. This time an eloquent appeal to the generous Earl of Salisbury secured his release. Yet again in 1625 the hand of the law fell on his shoulder. He was arrested on suspicion of being the author of some sympathetic lines addressed to Felton, then in prison as

Buckingham's assassin. The indictment of Jonson, however, proved to be a mistake and his incarceration was brief.

In a remarkable manner, never fully elucidated, his name is associated with the Gunpowder Plot. The Privy Council employed him as a secret agent to unravel the obscurities of the conspiracy, and he was instructed to approach certain Roman Catholic priests in his quest. His efforts—if he made any—were fruitless, involving apparently an element of duplicity and treachery which he could not stomach.

While Sir Walter Raleigh was a prisoner in the Tower writing his *History of the World*, the publication of which in 1614 Jonson supervised, the latter in 1613 went to Paris as tutor to Raleigh's eldest son. The visit was short and not of a very creditable nature in certain incidents. His more notable journey came in 1618, when, determined to indulge in a real holiday away from the fret and babble of Court and tavern life, he, like his great namesake (bar the spelling) a century or so later, fixed on Scotland. Though fat and scant of breath, he resolved to walk to the land of his ancestors. On the eve of departure Francis Bacon facetiously twitted him, declaring that 'he loved not to see poesy go on other feet than poetical dactylus and spondæus.'

He took the route through York and Newcastle and started about midsummer on a tramp which must have been fruitful to any literary man. He wrote a poetical account of it himself—'sung with all the adventures'—but ill-chance decreed that the manuscript should be destroyed with much else when his library was burnt.

The journey, however, was productive of the liveliest picture we possess of him, for he met the learned Scottish poet, William Drummond, who has left an intimate record of their conversations.

It was about Christmas-time that Drummond awaited the

coming of Jonson at his beautiful seat of Hawthornden, near Edinburgh. Seated under a sycamore tree, he acclaimed 'Welcome, welcome, royal Ben,' to which greeting the poet, remembering both his material and poetical feet, promptly responded, 'Thank ye, thank ye, Hawthornden.'

He stayed as the guest of Drummond for nearly three weeks, and as a result we have those 'Conversations' which display Jonson in a lurid light. Whether the portrait is accurate or the retailed talks unbiassed reporting, who can tell? Let it be remembered that Jonson had severely trounced some of Drummond's poems.

According to Drummond in these disclosures, Jonson 'is a great lover and praiser of himself . . . jealous of every word and action of those about him (especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he liveth) . . . he is passionately kind and angry . . . vindictive, but, if he be well answered, at himself.'

Very candid criticism and open to criticism in turn. At any rate the two men remained on friendly terms after they parted, and there was considerable correspondence between them.

Jonson's character was evidently a curious blend of generous and unpleasant features. They were heavy drinking days, and in his case when the wine was in it did not mellow but exacerbate. His worst faults were faults of temper, but the storms were soon over and the sequential calm was gracious and beneficent. If his tongue aped the serpent, he had no malice in his heart.

Only one of his legion of quarrels led to a contest at arms, but there were plenty that provoked wordy duels, vocal and in the printed scroll. In *The Poetaster* he lashed out freely at all and particularly at Dekker, who retorted in *Satiromastix* and with 'stinging nettles' crowned Jonson's 'stinging wit.' His contention with Inigo Jones, the architect, gave birth

to much biting satire. Jonson was a supreme master of the masque, that form of pageant with music and ornate scenic sets which Elizabeth and James so dearly loved. Jonson devised the plots and wrote the lyrics ; Inigo Jones ' did ' the spectacle. It would seem that Jonson deemed his poetical mortar more important than the architect's bricks and did not fail to tell him so ; hence the bickering.

Jonson had a flexible genius which ranged from the severely classical to the gentlest love lyric. There is a true ring of manliness in all his work. As a comic dramatist he mirrored the manners of his day with rich characterisation. The weight of his learning overburdened his tragedies ; he wrote only two.

Every Man in his Humour was the last of his plays to quit the stage. Garrick revived it in 1751, and it was occasionally performed in the early part of last century. Charles Dickens, an excellent amateur, and whose readings were chiefly notable for their touches of mimicry, is said to have made an inimitable Captain Bobadil, the blustering military puppet of the piece.

Ere he died at Westminster in his sixty-fourth year, Jonson came upon impoverished circumstances, which the Duke of Newcastle helped to ease. Among his papers was discovered the pastoral drama, *The Sad Shepherd*, a work of greenwood freshness and outstanding beauty, showing that his powers were unexhausted.

He left no family. His wife died before his journey to Scotland. Most of his children died young. On the whole his domestic life played a very small part in his scheme of existence. It was sung of him after his death—and what a mighty, concerted anthem was orchestrated !—that his

‘ *Thoughts were their own laurel, and did win
That best applause of being crowned within.* ’

GOLDEN EARRINGS.

A SAILOR'S YARN.

BY CALVERT RUSH.

THIS is a tale of the sea, and of a hate. It reaches from Barry Dock, across the Atlantic, and back to Antwerp quay. And it has the merit of truth.

The *Kingslake Hall* cleared Barry Dock in the ordinary outward-bound condition. She was bound for Valparaiso with a cargo of coal. Her hatches were off and her deck cluttered up with running gear, coal, snatchblocks, and all the paraphernalia of the sea. The riggers had made some sort of a job at bending sail and the Mate hoped he would find enough sober men to set things to rights before the southerly gale blowing outside put in some rough work. Clear of the Scillies the tug was dropped, the topsails set, and the old *Kingslake Hall* began working her way into the open sea, with a big sou'west swell coming up and a smother of mist.

We had a good, but very mixed crew. The cook was a big West India nigger who knew his job; there was a sprinkling of Germans and Scandinavians, but only four Britishers. The apprentices were all second or third voyagers and knew the ship well.

So we tracked South, as contented a ship as one could expect. In every fo'c'sle there is a boss. This voyage there seemed to be two. In the Port watch, a big Irish American, Paddy Doyle, with an immense nose and protruding ears from which hung large gold rings, such as

Spanish girls wear. He was very proud of those earrings. He had all the vices and few of the virtues of the real sailor, a bully, and he ruled his watch with a rod of iron. In the other watch was a Scot, a younger man, but a thorough sailor; smaller than Paddy, he was all muscle and bone, a tough man to meet in a scrap. A Norwegian, Bill Svensun, a man of berserk build, attached himself to Scottie. He seemed to realise that nature had given him only brawn, and he admired brain, when he met it. Often I have sat on the main hatch and heard Scottie spout poetry. Bill would sit beside us, his pipe in his mouth, listening with a queer daft expression in his eyes.

In Paddy's watch there was an ordinary seaman called Davy Jones, a congenital idiot. Always willing, yet always stupid, he listened with dog-like patience to any order given him and did exactly the opposite; his very name annoyed the men, and he had a squint in one eye—both omens of bad luck.

We hauled the old ship through the Horse latitudes, and struck good Trades. As is customary, hands clustered round the main hatch during the fine evenings. Paddy could sing a good song; Scottie, sitting with his pipe and Bill beside him, gave us his ideas on predestination. On one of these peaceful evenings the tragedy happened. Scottie had been quoting Milton, with one eye on the moon and the stars overhead.

*'Hesperus, that led the starry host, rode brightest,
Until the moon, rising in sombre majesty, unveiled her peerless
light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle cast.'*

Just at that moment we heard a thud and a cry. Looking round we saw Davy lying crumpled up on deck; he had annoyed Paddy, who had given him a lift behind, a little

too low, and the lad was really hurt. Before I realised what was happening Scottie had jumped off the hatch and faced Paddy.

. 'Come on, you big American bum,' he growled, 'let's see what you can do with a man.'

Although Paddy was the stronger man he had no knowledge of boxing, but the conditions and the light were not suited for science. One of Paddy's wild swings connected. Scottie went down as though pole-axed, and, in falling, caught his head heavily on the iron bitts. Paddy stood over him howling curses, but his opponent lay strangely still. He was on his side, blood trickling from his head. Bill knelt down beside him. Others ran up and the Mate came hurrying forward. Suddenly Bill jumped up and rushed at Paddy.

'You vos kill 'im,' he yelled, and without a thought of fighting simply flung his arms round him as though he would crush him to pieces. It took six of us to pull him off and hustle him away. Meanwhile the Captain had joined the Mate and between them they carried Scottie's body aft.

The next day we had the funeral. At noon a canvas-covered body was put on a plank under the Union Jack. All hands stood round uncovered, whilst the Captain read the service. The Trade had eased up and we were just stealing easily through the water. Bill was in tears. The Mate took him to one side, and after pointing out that the affair was an accident, told him that there had been fighting enough. Bill nodded. At eight bells, when the hands mustered again, he went up to Paddy and said very quietly :

'You kill my pal, I not fight on dis ship, but one day I get you !'

From then on Bill was more silent than ever. He had been so used to sitting beside Scottie and just listening that he was lost without him.

The dead man's clothes were auctioned on the main hatch. Except for the customary grumblings over extra wheels and lookouts he was forgotten by all except Bill. Off the Horn we had a fortnight of misery. For a week the galley was washed out. We spent four hours on the topsail yard trying to furl a frozen sail, our fingers numbed and our whole selves chilled to the bone. Eventually the canvas blew clean from the bolt ropes, and so furled itself. Two nights afterwards the whole watch was nearly washed overboard.

Bill was as nearly happy as he had ever been since Scottie's death. He enjoyed suffering the tortures of being frozen, starved and half-drowned. He haunted the Irishman—never speaking, never interfering, just following him, shadow-like, with fixed looney-green eyes, which in the dark seemed to glow like flames. The crew thought Bill was half-witted—since Scottie's death he had gone entirely daft—that was all there was to it. That he was obsessed by the idea of Revenge never entered anyone's head but mine—and Paddy's!

Paddy suspected. He was afraid—perhaps more of the dead than the living. He became moody. His shipmates shunned him. At last we got a slant, and crept North. At the end of one hundred and twenty days a weary crew furled sail in Valparaiso.

We lay out in the roads, got rid of our coal; each watch had the usual month's pay and twenty-four hours' leave. They were doped in the first café, robbed, left on the beach asleep, hauled to the Calaboose by the local police, and bailed out the day after by the Captain. Then we commenced

loading saltpetre. With the last bag came the old traditional shantying up to the tune of 'We're homeward bound.' Then a barrel of 'piscoe,' a native drink like very bad gin, came aboard. Many of the crews of other ships came along and we had what whaling men used to call a 'Gam.' I don't remember much of the night. I was fearful of Paddy and Bill. We were to heave up at daybreak. We had all expected that Paddy would go. There was always a ship to be had at Valparaiso in those days. But he stayed. We had a fair passage home, I caught a glimpse of the Horn whilst loosing the Main Royal. It was a cold dry day, with the long seas sweeping up behind and the old ship snoring her way to the north-east. Bill was as queer as ever and never spoke.

We reached Flushing just a year out. As we changed pilots, boarding-house masters and the usual crowd of sharks boarded us, and distributed fire water to the hands until, when we came to dock in Antwerp, Bill and Paddy were the only sober ones of the crowd. The next day we were paid off. A fatherly Consul offered a ticket home by the Harwich boat, a pound as expenses, and the option of having the remainder of the money sent to any British port free. Bill, Paddy and I accepted; the rest left with the sharks and the crimps.

We were sailing at seven in the evening. I wondered all day whether Bill had staged his revenge. When he came on board it would be too late. The night was wet. The wind was bringing a blanket of mist that dimmed the quay lights. On the Harwich boat I found our Bos'un waiting in the bar for a final drink and a farewell. We talked of the voyage.

'All that stuff about Bill waiting for revenge,' the Bos'un said; 'nothing came of it. I knew he hadn't got the sense.

He's just the brains of a dog—can't do more than creep about with his tail between his legs 'cause he's lost his master.'

'Bos'un,' I said, 'that man *had* an idea—he meant to do something. God knows what. Anyway, his chance is gone now.'

As I spoke a cry came from the darkness outside. It wasn't quite human, more like the cry of a frightened beast.

'What the hell——'

'Sounds as if someone had kicked a dog,' I said, and as I spoke there followed the sound of a splash, and on top of it the bellow of a passing steamer which drowned all other noises.

'Come on, have one more,' the Bos'un said. 'I've got ten minutes yet.'

Bill came into the bar ; he appeared suddenly without a sound. His face was grey. He ordered a drink, sat very still, eyeing the quay outside. I glanced at the Bos'un, but neither of us spoke. I remembered afterwards how queer that seemed—three shipmates sitting in a bar, mum !

Suddenly the Bos'un blurted out : 'Where's Paddy ? He's crossing with you, isn't he ?'

Bill was draining his glass ; he looked at us over the rim. I tried to look away, but his queer green eyes held me. I'd never seen eyes shining with such an intense and almost devilish joy of life in them—and pride. They weren't the eyes of a half-baked looney now—a madman if you like, or a poet.

'What's that about Paddy ?' he said, draining the last drop of liquor from his glass.

'I was thinking he'd be missing the boat if he don't hurry up,' the Bos'un said.

Bill got up, slowly stretched himself ; you could almost

see the ripple of muscles beneath the wet clothes. 'Paddy's not coming back. He's staying here—looking for something nice to keep him company!'

As he walked away I felt the Bos'un's hand gripping my arm in a vice, and I was holding on to him too. For as Bill moved we both saw at the same moment gold earrings swinging from his ears. And on one earring there was blood.

At the door he turned his head, and he saw the expression on our faces. 'Spotted them, eh? Parting present from Paddy—so there's no ill will between us any longer!'

PARADOX.

*All day the far horizon's line
Holds down the tented sky;
To distance which is infinite
It gives finality.*

*But when the clear air yields to dusk
And lit is each wan star,
The darkness, hiding nearer things,
Reveals the strange and far.*

M. D. HIGGINSON.

LEARNING TO RIDE A HOBBY.

BY PROFESSOR JOHN M. MCBRYDE.

My boyhood was spent on a farm in Virginia, where I was blessed with a father who not only knew his classics, Greek and Latin as well as English, but was also a keen and accurate observer of nature and a lover of flowers and birds. In the South Carolina College, which he entered in 1859, he studied under the noted geologist Joseph Leconte, who gave him his bent towards science. Thus at the close of the war between the states he devoted himself to the peaceful pursuits of agriculture and botany and made a complete herbarium of all the plants in the neighbourhood of Charlottesville.

How eagerly I used to watch him in the spring afternoons as he sorted out the flowers he had brought in from the fields and with loving care laid each one in turn between two white sheets of paper, placing them all in a home-made press with screw bolts at the corners. Then some days later I was fascinated to observe him as he took them out beautifully pressed and dried, and pasted them on other sheets with little paper strips, printing with his pen the name of each one in beautiful letters at the bottom. Not having a press of my own, I used to gather flowers and bright-coloured foliage and lay them between the leaves of big volumes, which bear to this day the stain on their pages.

So I set myself early to collecting flowers, and even yet I can recall the pride I felt in coming to recognise and know intimately the Viper's Bugloss, or beautiful blue thistle, with its clustered flowers on short curved spikes. Though I was not then aware of the fact that this lovely weed, as we call

it, had escaped from English gardens as early as 1683 and had been imported into this country by the English colonists, there was a romantic appeal in the very name, which at the age of eight I was very proud to know and cite as evidence of my budding knowledge of botany. I couldn't guess what the viper had to do with the flower, but the name had a strange attraction for me, and it would have thrilled me even more if I had then been told that 'bugloss' means ox-tongue, a name given to it in England long ago. My imagination and my feelings would have been stirred even more deeply yet if I had known that the hairy leaves, coming to a point like a tongue, suggested the name, and that 'viper' was prefixed because of the spotted stem and the seeds shaped like a serpent's head, coupled with the popular belief that this plant may be used to cure snake-bite—a belief perpetuated in the name of the genus, *Echium*, from the Greek word for viper.

In my father's garden, where we gathered raspberries, strawberries and gooseberries, and where I came to know Viper's Bugloss, I had another experience the memory of which has lingered with me through the years. While stuffing myself with fruit one day, in constant dread of having a snake strike my bare toe—for the catbirds were uttering their harsh cries, sure evidence, I believed, of the presence of snakes—I heard a fluttering among the currant bushes, and approaching the spot cautiously, discovered a little bird mysteriously stuck to the stem of a weed. As I came nearer and attempted to lay hands on the tiny prisoner, it made a desperate flirt of its wings and escaped unharmed. Then, putting my hand on the stem of the strange plant, I was amazed to feel a sticky exudation, sufficiently strong to capture a host of insects small and large, with which the whole plant was blackened, and adhesive enough to hold

fast for a time the feet of the small bird as with glue. Now I know that the plant was one of the *Silene* family, most probably *Silene Caroliniana*, the wild pink, or Catchfly. The full significance of this incident came to me only years later, when I learned of the means nature has given to flowers to protect themselves against pilferers and insure the perpetuation of the species. But I was busy then with Westlake's Speller and Maury's Geography and agonising over addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, so that it was many years before I began to observe nature in detail and connect my observations with my study of poetry.

As my father was an ardent sportsman and a fine shot, and often rode horseback through the sedge fields and the woods, I had frequent opportunities to accompany him, seated behind on his horse to hold the reins; having fired from the saddle, he dismounted to follow the dogs after the single quails of the covey. And so I picked up some knowledge of the ways of the birds, especially as he was something of a taxidermist and mounted not a few specimens of robins, cardinals, and meadow larks.

Moreover, he had in his library a fine set of Wilson's *Ornithology*, from which, with paper greased to make it transparent, I used to trace the outlines of such birds as caught my fancy. But I had no systematic instruction, no consistent guidance in my efforts either to learn the names of the birds or to draw them from coloured plates or from stuffed specimens. Perhaps it was just as well, for I am inclined to believe that to-day we have too much supervision of children's physical and mental activities.

When I was twelve years old, my father became President of the South Carolina College, in Columbia. Here in the old College Library I chanced upon a magnificent set of the elephant folio of Audubon's *Birds of America*, and as I pored

over those superbly coloured plates, I felt that I had entered into a new world. Eager to share with my schoolmate some of my new-found knowledge, I organised through the *St. Nicholas* a chapter of the Agassiz Society, and we collected birds' eggs and birds' skins. Though I never learned to mount the skins properly, I stretched them with wings and breast outspread on cardboards, which I hung upon the wall. Underneath each skin I inscribed the Latin name. Among them I recall vividly the beautiful skin of the Redheaded Woodpecker, with its brilliant carmine, iridescent black, and shining white, beneath which I proudly wrote the long Latin name *Picus Erythrocephalus*.

After the lapse of nearly half a century I can recreate the rapture I experienced when I first made the acquaintance with the Great Crested Flycatcher and heard his mournful 'Quake ! quake ! quake !' in the woods. Like Wordsworth, of whom I knew nothing then, I looked a thousand ways in bush and tree and sky before I could make out his dusky brown plumage in the top of a lofty oak. How we boys used to tramp the woods and fields, with eyes peering sharply into every bush and clump of grass and tall tree, with ears attuned to the slightest sound, all eager to add some new specimen to our collection. It was an event in our lives when we came upon the gorgeous Nonpareil, or Painted Bunting, or Red Pop (French *Pape*, Pope), as he is called by the folk of French descent in Louisiana, for with his head and neck an indigo blue, his back a golden green, his wing coverts green, and his underparts bright red, they discovered in his plumage some suggestion of papal robes.

Once in the early twilight on the edge of some open woods we stumbled upon a male Chuck-will's-widow, which I shot and skinned, and added another specimen to our collection. It was not, however, until forty years later

that I heard its weird, insistent call on the bayous of Mississippi. And, as I have told in the CORNHILL for October, 1934, I had the rare good fortune of having a solitary male of this shy species pay a visit to my home in the heart of New Orleans, where, perched high on a tree outside my bedroom window, he roosted all day long every day for a week, before setting out on his migration to a more southerly clime.

As I look back through the years I cherish the memories of these experiences of my boyhood and rejoice that I early learned to ride a hobby which has taken me on many a pleasant excursion through the fields and woods and which has furnished never-failing inspiration to my study and teaching of poetry.

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QUESTING FOR FLOWERS.

BY W. M. LETTS.

No tallyho and no red coat, only a vasculum and a gleam in the eye, and a stick with a crook for handle, for the dear knows what may not have to be dragged in from river or pond. It is not every botanist who can do like Dr. Lloyd Praeger, the Irish botanist, who has swum out to rock or island where he spied some treasure. Without any of the pageantry of an animal hunt the flower-hunter goes out to adventure, often dangerous enough, as one knows from the books (most enchanting of all travel books) of those who go to Thibet and China, to South America, Mexico or to any place mountainous or swampy in quest of flowers. The adventures of a Farrar, a Kingdon Ward, a Bailey make glorious reading, but most of us can only hope to see the treasures they found when grown in British gardens. The lovely blue poppy of the Himalayas is beautiful in any garden and Alpines grown in pots can thrill one to the heart's core, but as for the joy of finding them in their own setting, that belongs to the flower-hunter. And his harvest is not only in roots and seeds, but in the pictures he stores in his memory.

What a glory to give your name to a plant, to be connected for ever with some loveliness that you discovered. When I note in catalogues these surnames of plants I envy the finder—Farrerii, Baileyii, Veitchii, Henryii. The last name gives me a thrill of recollection, for Dr. Augustine Henry lived in Dublin when he returned from China, the scene of his flower-hunting. He went to China as a young

man in Chinese customs, but his interest and knowledge as a botanist made his fame floral. Every time I saw him passing along the street, a little abstracted in look, I saw in fancy the mountains and plains of China behind him. His collection of trees was so great that his widow has taken six years to get them catalogued in the Herbarium at Glasnevin gardens. The seeds that he sent back from China she grew in a town garden in a district of Dublin and supplied two thousand young trees to growers.

But that is an aside about long-range flower-hunting. Within the British Isles there is enough for the quest to be a lifelong one. Until every specimen in Bentham and Hooker's *British Flora* has been found and noted there is no need to sit down and rest. And after Bentham there comes Butcher, and very superior hunters are Butcherites. And then (I find by experience) if you bring your rarity to a *real* botanist to name, he tells you something that you cannot find in either Bentham or Butcher, because the *real* botanist subdivides and thinks in names that the amateur has not yet dreamed.

But I want to write of the fun of the quest, because the day of finding some rare thing is sure to be a happy day in lovely country. Each county has its treasures and it is well to be aware of what you may find in each place. There are plants peculiar to old town walls, as in Norwich and Nottingham; there are districts like Teesdale rich in lovely things like the *Cypripedium* orchis; there are salt marshes with their sea lavender and glass wort and shrubby seablite; there are the Fens—but I have only hunted the Fens in dreams.

Ireland has a smaller flora than that of England, but it can boast rarities and it has its Mediterranean plants. To anyone who has not seen it, the large butterwort (*Pinguicula*

Grandiflora), growing all through wet mossy ground, is sheer joy. The flowers are the size of huge violets and much the same colour. In May time in Kerry you will find them everywhere. Much smaller and more curious than beautiful is the little yellow butterwort (*P. lusitanica*). It brings me back to the slopes of a mountain in Connemara where an ardent party of Field Naturalists went out hunting.

Ardour on a very hot day after a good lunch waned in many breasts. 'Field Nats' were discovered lying on the heather or under the shade of the lowland trees; only the sternest band reached the top of the mountain, Lisoughter. On our way we found *Galium Boreale*, *Saxifrage Oppositifolia*, *Asplenium viride*. The following day was spent in the Burren of Clare. Now the Burren is unlike any place that I have ever seen. On a summer day it is bleak, austere, a circle of the Purgatorio; but in winter in east wind it must be lonely and forbidding beyond most places. Its great terraces of limestone descend to the sea. It seems incredible that there should be so much stone in the world. The Burren is Ireland's paved garden. It is a paradise for flower-hunters. Many people, wise in their generation, go to the village of Ballyvaughan in the Burren in May when the gentians and dryas are in flower. For this is one of the places where *gentiana verna* flourishes and the hillside is white with *dryas octopetala*. But the day that I recall was too late for these beauties, they were already in seed. As we climbed to the upper terraces, we found the wild maidenhair among the rocks, with madder, bearberry and *Habenaria intacta* and *Euphrasia Salisburgensis*. We should have found *Pyrola media*, but even with a strenuous rushing after the long legs of one of Ireland's leading botanists I never saw it that day, nor did he. Apart from any plants, the Burren itself is a place to see, a lonesome place if ever I saw one. I wonder

that the hermits of old times did not make their beehive huts there and remain lost in contemplation. Those acres of limestone terrace would leave little distraction to a devout soul in its quest for the Infinite. 'Where there is nothing there is God.'

Even before I joined that ardent group, the Wild Flower Society, I found, without seeking, certain treasures. The truth was that having won that delightful book, John's *Flower of the Field*, in my schooldays I had always had an eye for anything unusual. So, when a kind Fate took me to Northumberland in 1918 I was aware that I saw plants I had never seen before. Once, wandering alone, in a fir wood to the north of Alnwick I saw and noted, without keeping a specimen, a little white flower growing among the pine-needles. My description of it was too vague to find the name and I could not discover its likeness in my John's. It was only when I got Bentham and Hooker that I found it out as *Trientalis*. Never again did I find it, and the beauty of the day and that little wood are as fresh as the young larches. Near the same wood grew a large bell flower which I fancy was *Campanula latifolia*. And who will tell me (or did my eyes deceive me?) if I really saw a campanula growing like a weed in the railed earth in front of the Crystal Palace where the No. 3 bus starts its long journey. That same bus bore me away before I could make any observations. There is something bewitching about every wild orchis, a thrill of discovery even when it grows with the glorious generosity of the early spring orchis, so brightly pink, so fairylike with its darkly spotted leaves. The orchis family is choice in taste. These flowers live in beautiful places, meadows, damp hedgerows, cool boggy fields, woodlands. Some are scented and some are only curious. More curious than beautiful is the little *Spiranthes*

Autumnalis, or Lady's Tresses. I saw it first in its spiral habit growing out of the parched grass of a hillside above Cardigan Bay. And whenever I meet it again I shall picture that sun-smitten breadth of water with the Snowdon range in the distance. Again—one cannot find the Bee Orchis and pass by indifferently. It is not very rare; I remember long ago the excitement of finding it on Beachy Head, and now I know just where it should reappear in places in Ireland. It is no surprise, but an annual joy.

This summer, driving over a long expanse of bog near Maryborough, I stopped to have a little hunt near the roadside and found myself among masses of *Epipactis Palustris*, the Marsh Helleborine, which Bentham describes as rare in Ireland, while Dr. Praeger gives it an abundance of stations. It is a lovely thing to see and the thought of it brings back the charm of a great bog with its subdued colours, sienna and russet, green and purple; its grey and green mosses, its spongy masses, green and red, of sphagnum, its gold tips of bog ashphodel and its clouds of white bed-straw and, best of all, the great vault of sky above the level horizon.

In boggy ground in Connemara you may find the three sundews, and if you are instructed or wise on your own account you will find *Pilularia globulifera* in the water. About the lake margins grow the water lobelia (*Lobelia Dortmanna*) and that curious intriguing plant Pipewort.

It was in Connemara that I found St. Dabeoc's Heath and the day is marked with a white stone. Let me tell you about it, for it involves a question for all travellers, just this—what is the most beautiful drive in Ireland? Mr. Stephen Gwynn, who is the chieftain of Irish guides, decides on the drive from Cahir by Clogheen over the Knockmealdown mountains, dropping down to Lismore on the other side of the

Pass. Its beauties were hidden in mist and rain when we took the road, so I put forward as a rival the road between Mallaranny and Maam Cross in Connemara.

We left Achill in the morning and, driving by Newport and Westport, came to Louisburgh, and from there took that lovely road by Doolough Pass, Doo Lake and Delphi Lodge. The mountains that day seemed every shade of green velvet sewn with little silver streamlets. And so in a warm afternoon we came to Lecnane and the Killaries and on again by Kylemore and Letterfrack to Clifton and the Atlantic. It was the sun-setting hour, the Twelve Pins the colour of violets, the lakes at Ballinahinch like drenched hydrangeas where we sat by the roadside to have our supper. And then I spied the largest heath I had ever seen, with magenta pink bells. My companion could name it at once as St. Dabeoc's Heath. That was the flower to link with the beauty of Connemara.

Evil but beautiful is another plant not known in England, the Irish spurge. It is the tool of the poacher-fisherman, and kills the fish by poisonous qualities. A poacher with spurge found on him can be arrested. Yet I remember the woods at Blarney bright with its lovely green. All the spurges are attractive in a strange sort of way, and while doing some dutiful weeding in Kent last summer I added Sun spurge and Broad spurge to my diary. Thus for the collector is the labour of weeding made sweet, only he often desires to leave a desirable specimen till it flowers.

Salt marshes are enchanting to the plant-hunter even in an east wind. The thought of Blakeney in Norfolk with its mist of sea lavender, its dim stretches of marsh and the far sands of the bird sanctuary, delights my daydreams. Shrubby seablite, glasswort, sea asters are found as well as the lavenders.

The treasures of a bog are manifold. Near Ardee in County Louth there is a bog most alluring to the searcher. I have nearly fallen headlong into bog pools in quest of them, for the Wild Flower Society has a rule that you must touch every flower that you record in the diary. Not even a stick may do duty. This rule has very obvious dangers with water plants. This particular day was one of those drenching, hopeless affairs that grow sadder towards evening. What matter when one saw the greater Spleenwort in reach and knew that Adder's tongue and Andromeda could be found there?

So, to conclude, there is no place where the quest may not carry one joyfully. Botany is no dry-as-dust subject, but a continual adventure. That first of Irish botanists, Dr. Lloyd Praeger, proves in his books and by his own adventures that it is as exciting as any quest that the schoolboy heart can follow. His advice on the subject of searching is useful. He told his audience to choose a particular line of search—mountain, bog, salt marsh, limestone district. 'But,' he said in effect, 'know what you seek, find out what has been found in the district and hope to find it and perhaps some treasure to make a new country station.'

WALKING HOME.

So little it is—
Walking home together beneath the trees
On a summer night,
Casting desultory talk
Into the sweet night air,
Swinging along together shoulder to shoulder
Under the wide pale sky—
 So little and brief it is.

Yet I will always remember
Walking home together beneath the trees,
Tossing with easy abandon
Talk and light-hearted laughter
Into the sweet night air,
As though time and the hour of parting
Never between us existed.

Good night—with a careless gesture—
So little, so much it is !
Dearest, remember with me
In times of distress and trouble,
In the sterile and dusty dog-days,
Remember and keep for treasure
The little but blessed moments
Of walking home together beneath the trees.

CLARE CAMERON.

EPICS OF THE ALPS.

BY C. F. MEADE.

I

THE ATTEMPTS ON THE EIGERWAND.

THE recent sensational exploits of a new school of Alpine climbers has scandalised the mountaineering world, and with good cause. Nevertheless, the foolhardy performances that orthodox mountaineers complain of are merely the logical outcome of tendencies that have been obvious in mountain-climbing ever since it began. Since the fifties of last century when climbing first became fashionable, not only have all the peaks in the Alps been ascended, great and small, but even all the gullies, faces and ridges of each mountain have been overrun by innumerable enthusiasts. In fact it may be said that hardly anywhere in the Alps does there now remain any kind of a way up or down that has not been systematically explored and recorded.

So complete, indeed, has this process become that the young desperados belonging to what is known as the 'mechanical' school of climbing have begun to take alarm. These virtuosos who delight in forcing their way up a mountain by hammering pegs into overhanging rocks or vertical ice-walls—'conquering' the mountain as they would call it—have realised that the era of exploration has come to an end, and that there are no more laurels left for them to win. This alarming state of affairs they describe as 'the exhaustion of the Alps,' and it certainly explains—if it does not excuse—the excesses that these youthful zealots commit.

However, this so-called exhaustion of the Alps is not quite complete yet, for at least one notable exception to it survives. At Grindelwald the appalling northern precipice of the Eiger that overshadows the valley, and forms the sensational feature of the view from the village, still remains unclimbed, and until 1935 its forbidding appearance had deterred everyone from meddling with it. It is true that a daring party in 1932 had skirted the brink of the huge cliff by following a difficult route that led along its eastern margin over steep snow and ice to the summit ; nevertheless, the direct and steeper route up the very centre of the colossal wall had never been attempted.

It is not surprising that such a climb should never have been seriously thought of before 1935, for this amazing north wall of the Eiger, the Eigerwand as it is called, is the biggest precipice in the Alps. Throughout its five thousand feet of precipitous rock its steepness is such that, in spite of the altitude, permanent snow cannot rest anywhere. From top to bottom, too, the whole of the vast rock-face is shattered by constant bombardments of ice-fragments and boulders. Besides these there are smaller missiles in the shape of flying stones, and most of these projectiles, big and little, travel at a speed that renders them invisible, as they whistle and scream past the cowering climber clinging precariously to the stricken crags.

It seems as if the present strenuous phase in the evolution of mountaineering has evoked a new type of mountain-climber adapted to an environment that has become more and more exacting in consequence of what we have referred to as the exhaustion of the Alps. This new type of climber, proud of his skill in the use of hammers, pegs, rope-rings, balustrades, stirrups, slings and pulleys, finds a new source of joy in a mystical worship of danger as an end in itself, so that he

considers even the most foolish feat praiseworthy, as long as courage, skill and endurance are displayed in performing it. In the sinister shadow of the Eigerwand the votaries of this strange cult now seek their Valhalla. It may be profitable to learn from the story of their adventures the consequence of the doctrines that they preach. At any rate the self-sacrificing heroism of the guides who staked their lives continuously and repeatedly in desperate attempts at rescue deserves to be remembered.

In August of 1935 two young men from Munich reached Grindelwald. They spent some time reconnoitring the lower cliffs of the Eigerwand, and one of them devoted a whole day to ascending the Eiger by the ordinary way in order to leave a depot of provisions on the summit. Meanwhile at the foot of the mighty wall the two men prepared a tent and sleeping-bags as their base-camp where they could remain with their stores of rope and tools. They then waited in hopes of an improvement in the weather, which, in fact, was so bad that they were several times sorely tempted to abandon their enterprise and go home.

At last on Wednesday the 21st the weather improved, and they began their attack upon the precipice. By the evening they could be well observed from the Eigerwand station of the Jungfrauoch Railway, through the window cut in the solid flank of the Eiger where the passengers pause on their way up inside the mountain in order to enjoy the panorama of northern Switzerland, and gaze down at the chalets of Grindelwald nestling in the green depths far below.

Everything seems to have gone well, for the climbers were now on a level with the station, and had succeeded in accomplishing about one-third of their immense journey up the cliff.

On Thursday, however, the rate was not maintained.

Moreover, as a critic has expressed it, the first half of the wall is only about a quarter as difficult as the whole ; and still there were two-thirds of the formidable task to be achieved, for during the whole of this day, hampered as they were by the steepness of the ice, the climbers could only by their utmost efforts accomplish a paltry increase of some three hundred feet.

Already the prospects were disquieting enough, and again on Friday they had only ascended another three hundred feet. Obviously there was no longer any chance of victory, and the difficulties they were contending with were evident, for observers with telescopes could see the climbers hauling up their rucksacks after them by means of the rope. Later that evening a terrible storm suddenly concealed them from view.

On Saturday the whole mountain was ominously swathed in cloud, so that the men were still invisible. There was much fresh snow higher up the mountain, and avalanches, big as well as small, were pouring down the rocks.

On Sunday the anxiety of the watchers was reaching a climax, yet in such weather rescue operations were out of the question. The doomed men were again momentarily visible. They had made little progress, and were making their fifth bivouac, at about two-thirds of the way up the wall. Doubtless they spent the night in the customary manner of these devotees, crouching against the cliff without sleeping-bags or blankets, and with the climbing-rope that united them fastened for the sake of security by means of a steel clasp to a ringed metal peg driven into any available crevice in the rock. The clasp, it may be mentioned, is an important feature of the mechanical mountaineer's equipment, and is a contrivance resembling the clasp on some brobdingnagian watch-chain.

Meanwhile it had begun to rain all over the Oberland, and,

although snow was only falling at great heights, the danger from waterfalls, stonefalls and the increasing exhaustion of the climbers was growing constantly. At Grindelwald a rescue-party had been formed, but the weather remained prohibitive. An aeroplane had been warned to stand by, and on Tuesday, the first clear day, a pilot from Thun in a military plane flew for a full hour to and fro across the Eigerwand, scanning the cliffs. There were masses of fresh snow everywhere, and no living being was in sight. Several days later, when fine weather had definitely returned, another pilot, accompanied by an Alpine guide, actually flew to within twenty yards of the precipice, and caught sight of one of the two men standing upright, frozen to death, up to his knees in the snow, as if gazing down into the valley. The other man, they thought, must have been already buried in a drift. Probably both men had died where they had last been seen, on the fifth day of their attempt.

In 1936 another summer had come round, the tragedy of the Eiger was fresh in men's minds, but a party was gathered once more at the foot of the same forbidding precipice with the same desperate ambition that had led the two youths to destruction in the previous year. Eight young men had been dreaming the same dream of the Eigerwand, and were mustering their resources for the assault. They had collected quantities of rope and the usual paraphernalia employed by climbers of their way of thinking. Yet already death had taken its toll among the aspirants, for two of them who had been doing a practice climb on the Guggi route up the north face of the Jungfrau had fallen, and one of them had been killed. Of the others now waiting to make an attempt, Kurz, the youngest, had qualified as a guide in the Eastern Alps. With his friend, Hinterstosser, who was to accompany him, he had already accomplished formidable ascents

such as the storming of the north wall of the Grosse Zinne, one of the sheerest precipices in the Alps. Two other young men of the party, Rainer and Angerer, were from Innsbruck. All these four showed equal determination. 'The Eigerwand is ours, or we shall leave our bones on it,' they declared. Yet the weather was even worse than in 1935, when the two young men from Munich had said that the storms seemed as if sent to them by providence, to prevent their departure, and save their lives. It rained constantly and the Eiger was hidden in cloud. Only brief glimpses through the cloud-curtain revealed the wall frowning down at them and loaded with masses of fresh snow. Avalanches thundered, and the crackling reverberations caused by stonefall were almost continuous. Doubt began to spread among the party, and no wonder. They must have known that before committing themselves to a five-days' struggle on such a precipice a preliminary spell of settled weather was essential, in order to stabilise the conditions, and that only a prolonged spell of equable weather is likely to give more than a day's warning before it breaks up. With several days' warning it might be possible for a party to retreat in time to escape before conditions prohibitive to life have supervened. In seasons that are variable the onset of dangerous conditions can occur with terrible abruptness. No wonder then that four of the less infatuated members of the group abandoned the venture. However, the Bavarians, Kurz and Hinterstosser, remained, and so did the Austrians, Rainer and Angerer. These four now decided to join forces.

In the meantime there were many visitors to the tents at the foot of the Eigerwand, and many sought to reason with the party, but the camp resounded with youthful laughter, and the four protested that they had no wish to die, although they admitted that luck was necessary for the undertaking. Down

at Grindelwald they had even been told that the local authorities would take no responsibility for rescue operations, but they were confident that none would be required. All that was necessary was one more preliminary reconnaissance, and, with this object in view, the four set out together. They soon reached a suitable bivouac-place under a huge overhanging cliff known as the Rothe Fluh. They had once passed the night there during a previous exploratory climb. Unfortunately, when they had got thus far, instead of staying where they were for the night, in order to reconnoitre farther next day, they decided to return to their base, and at this juncture the Eigerwand gave its first warning. Hinterstosser was just beginning to descend, and was about fifty feet above Kurz's head. He trusted his weight to a peg that Angerer and Rainer had hammered into the rock some days previously. The peg suddenly gave way, and Hinterstosser was hurled down for a hundred and twenty feet through the air past his horrified companion. The latter could do nothing to check the fall, for it happened with the rapidity of lightning, so that there was no time to make a futile attempt to belay the rope. By a miracle the falling man not only hunched himself into a ball, but dropped into a patch of deep soft snow, where he saved himself from a further fall by his acrobatic dexterity. Strange to say, the only damage was a wounded knee, and, although when they got back to camp the rain had begun again, the four men never wavered in their determination to pursue their adventure to its end.

On Friday the 17th of July the weather looked better, and all were satisfied that up to 10,000 feet the precipice had been sufficiently reconnoitred. Rucksacks were packed, and there was much amusement when Kurz made a comic story for the pressmen out of Hinterstosser's hundred-and-twenty-

feet fall. Hinterstosser in the meantime was packing some photographs away in a sack that was to be left behind. 'If anything happens to us,' he remarked to the reporters, 'you will know where to find our photographs.'

It was regrettable that more food could not be carried. Sixty hand-forged pegs with rings attached were a heavy burden. Twenty of them, about a foot long, were for use on ice-walls, and forty of a shorter kind were intended for hammering into crevices in the rock-face in places where otherwise hand-holds would be lacking. Besides this weight of metal they had to carry hammers, a few steel clasps, two hundred and forty feet of spare rope, some string and the spirit cooker. Consequently, without overloading their rucksacks the only provisions they could take were two pounds of bacon, five pounds of black bread, six tins of sardines, tea, sugar and solidified spirit. It was not nearly enough, but greater loads could not be managed.

Finally, at two o'clock in the morning of Saturday the 18th of July the four set out from the Kleine Scheidegg. The news spread through Switzerland, and the ethics of the enterprise began to be discussed once more. A telegram from the commanding officer of the Bergsjaeger regiment forbidding Hinterstosser and Kurz from taking part in the expedition came too late, for the two young men had already started and were out of reach. By half-past nine that morning the whole party had gathered at the reconnoiters' sleeping-place under the Rothe Fluh. Everything seemed favourable, and progress had been rapid, but, from now on, difficulties began, and observers at the Kleine Scheidegg and Grindelwald thronged to the telescopes. It could be seen that from the sleeping-place a difficult traverse had to be made over some very smooth cliffs. Hinterstosser succeeded in crossing at a point where Rainer and Angerer had already

failed. A narrow belt of snow and a difficult descending traverse then enabled the party to join the route of 1935 at the lower of two small snow-fields. To the distant watchers at the telescopes progress seemed agonisingly slow, yet the men wasted no time, for they were expert at their work, hammering and chiselling the rock whenever one of the precious pegs could be spared, and there was a chance of forcing it into a suitable crevice. The rocks indeed were so steep and difficult that it was a long time before the party reached the second bivouac used by the two Bavarians in 1935, and situated between the lower and the upper snow-fields.

By 5.30 in the afternoon the last man had reached the foot of the cliff below the upper snow-field, night was approaching and a site for a bivouac had to be found. The formidable overhang of the Rothe Fluh was now behind them, and they settled down to pass the night, partly sheltered by another overhanging cliff. They were now on a level with the third and last bivouac of the Munich pair, where the latter were supposed to have perished. Here the four men remained all night without sleeping-bag or blanket, while the stones that thundered down the mountain continuously were deflected by the overhang above the sleepers' heads.

On the following day, Sunday, dawn broke threateningly with thunder-clouds, and only occasionally were patches of blue sky visible. At Zurich it was already raining, and although a north wind was driving the clouds upwards, the party in their bivouac, condemned to inaction by the cloud-bank surrounding them, could hardly have realised that there were signs of a momentary improvement in the weather. By 6.45 that morning, however, they had started, and Hinterstosser was leading, cutting steps up the steep *névé* of the upper snow-field, in order to rejoin the route taken by the party of the previous year. An hour later they were suddenly

hidden by a curtain of cloud, and nothing more was to be seen of the Eiger that day.

It was not until eight o'clock on Monday morning that they were again observed to be on the move. Their second bivouac must have been at a height of about 11,800 feet, a little above the highest point reached in 1935, but soon they began to retreat and were back at the second bivouac once more. One climber was seen to be so long immobile that it was concluded he was injured, and it was believed that Angerer had been wounded by a stone, as he appeared to be wearing a bandage on his head. As late as five o'clock that evening they were still to be seen descending the upper snow-field, above the overhanging precipice called the Rothe Fluh. Two of the party seemed to be helping a third, presumably Angerer, but the prevalence of clouds made it difficult to see what was happening. The situation had now become extremely serious, for the food-supply had only been calculated to last over the third night, and the third night was now beginning, while the climbers were still far up on the mountain. The supply of pegs, too, was being used up, the weather was not improving, and avalanches of stones and snow continued to fall.

Tuesday's weather, unfortunately, was much worse, with pouring rain and quantities of fresh snow everywhere covering the rocks. The roar of avalanches became almost continuous. Cries could be heard. At nine in the morning three of the party were seen descending. Could the fourth have dropped out? However, two hours later all four were seen, still descending the upper snow-field. Below them was a vertical and overhanging cliff that they had avoided on the way up. In order to avoid it again they must ascend the smooth and difficult rock traverse down which Hinterstosser had led them on their way up the mountain, three days before.

It was at this point that they met with a fatal reverse. The passage had taken them only two hours on the outward journey, but now, facing the traverse in its ascending direction, foodless and frozen as they were, short of iron pegs, too, and with a rope frozen so stiff that it was unmanageable, they failed repeatedly to force their way up the smooth ice-glazed slabs. At length they must have realised that retreat was now cut off, and that the one remaining hope was to face the appalling precipice below them and make a desperate attempt at a direct descent of it. After two hours had been wasted in fruitless struggles to ascend the traverse, the conclusion became inevitable, although the ghastly alternative of attempting to lower themselves by ropes into the abyss below them may well have seemed hopeless. Clouds, too, were seething round them, and the artillery of the Eigerwand was incessantly in action.

Meanwhile, from a point only six hundred feet below the four men, through an opening cut to serve as a rubbish-shoot for the tunnel of the Jungfrauoch Railway a workman, peering out from inside the mountain, had been for several hours watching the manœuvres of the climbers, and was now exchanging shouts with them. At first they still hoped, and they shouted down courageously that all was well. Later, when the whole party became involved in lowering themselves down the three hundred feet of precipice, cries for help could be heard, and the anxious spectator hurried down to give the alarm at the Eigergletscher station. The assailants of the Eigerwand had all been warned before starting that they could expect no guides to risk their lives in futile attempts at rescue, but it so happened that at that moment three of the best guides in Switzerland were working for a cinema company at the Eigergletscher station, and the railway company at once supplied a train to take them up to the workman's

observation-post at the hole in the tunnel. The three guides then climbed out through the hole, and in only three-quarters of an hour, at an astonishing speed, traversed the face of the deadly Eigerwand in a horizontal direction, and reached the foot of the precipice that the four men had been trying to descend. As they toiled across the face, pebbles, invisible like bullets, hummed past them, and a flying boulder crashed close to the leader. From the first it had been evident that it would be impossible to effect a rescue that night, and now it appeared that Kurz alone of all the climbers was alive. He was suspended in a sling from the overhanging cliff, and was exposed to stonefalls as well as torrents of snow and water. 'Can you hold out till morning?' he was asked, and 'No, no, no!' came the heart-rending reply. But it was already night, and the guides had no choice but to retreat and disregard his cries. The return journey in storm and darkness must have been an unforgettable nightmare.

During the night another guide of the same calibre joined the original three, and by daybreak of Wednesday all four, Adolf Rubi, Christian Rubi, Hans Schlunegger and Arnold Glatthard, climbed through the rubbish-shoot once more and again raced across the terrible wall. Kurz was still calling for help, and was even capable of telling something of his dreadful experiences. 'Are none of your friends alive?' he was asked. 'No, I am alone, they all died yesterday; one is frozen above me, one has fallen, and one lies hanging in the rope below.'

It seems that the four men had fixed a rope to the cliff, and had begun to rope themselves down into space over the overhang. As there had not been enough rope for all of them, Hinterstosser had been obliged to untie himself. In doing so he fell, perhaps having been knocked over by falling stones, and was dashed to destruction at the bottom of the precipice.

Angerer is said to have been strangled in the coils of falling rope, and Rainer was flung against one of the iron pegs with such violence that he died. Pegs and rope-rings had all been expended, and Kurz was helpless, third on the rope that linked him to his dead comrades, and crippled by having an arm and hand useless owing to frostbite. The guides, too, were in a desperate position, secured by their rope to a peg driven into an ice-slope of sixty degrees, and under fire from the relentless mountain. Glatthard, indeed, had narrowly escaped destruction. Moreover, they were still at a distance of a hundred and fifty feet below Kurz, and the interval that separated them consisted of smooth, vertical and overhanging rock, veneered with ice.

Since it was impossible to climb up to Kurz he was asked, 'Try and cut the dead man loose from you.' In order to do this he had to climb down forty feet—handicapped as he was by his crippled arm—and then with his ice-axe laboriously saw through the rope close to the loop round his friend's body. Afterwards he had to climb up again to where he was before in order to fix the severed rope to the peg to which he had been suspended. By a miracle of resolution and endurance, after hours of toil, he succeeded in carrying out these exhausting manœuvres. At first the corpse could not be detached, for it was frozen to the cliff; then, when it suddenly plunged into space, it narrowly missed sweeping the guides with it, as it hurtled past them in its three-thousand-feet fall. Then, after Kurz, working with one hand and often with his teeth, had climbed back to his former position, he had to lower the severed rope to the guides, who attached to it some pegs and rope-rings. These were then drawn up to Kurz, who hammered in a peg, and passed the rope through the ring which he had fastened to the peg. The guides were so placed that it was impossible for them to help Kurz by

lowering him in pulley fashion, and the whole series of Kurz's heroic efforts seemed endless. Four hours were consumed in this terrible work before the unfortunate man could begin the descent. As he did so it was noticed that he carefully removed any loose stones which might otherwise have been dislodged and have fallen on to the guides below him. As he slowly descended, an avalanche swept over the whole party, concealing Kurz from view for some moments.

And now, at the end of this heroically prolonged struggle, Kurz's consciousness was beginning to fail. Yet he was almost down. 'Another step and you'll be saved,' cried the guides, and then with a supreme effort, one guide climbing on to the shoulders of another, while a third held him in position, it became just possible to touch the ice-coated climbing-irons of Kurz with the tip of an ice-axe, but he was still just beyond their reach. At this moment occurred the final disaster: the knot that joined the rope together caught fast in the ring fifty feet above the victim's head, and would allow him to descend no farther. This was the end. Suddenly, throwing his axe to the guides, he let go his hold, and, swinging slowly out into space, he died. The devoted efforts of heroic rescuers had been in vain, and death had come to Kurz at a moment when the reward of his unparalleled endurance and courage seemed to be close at hand. The guides, overcome by the spectacle of such unavailing fortitude, returned by the way they had come.

'An Episode on the Dru' will be published in September.

BY THE WAY.

A critic of eminence, writing to me recently, said that he had always been able to keep separate a man's character from his creative works : how can that be an aid to criticism ? What is written, it is true, is written, but how much it gains or loses according to our knowledge of its sincerity or the reverse. And, in any event, is it possible so to separate a man's character from what must in reality be the product of that character ? My friend, to whom I had mentioned both Shakespeare and Chaucer as essentially genial-minded men, asked me if I were sure they were, adding, ' It is quite possible that they were both odious brutes, and perhaps it is just as well that we know nothing about them personally—at any rate not very much about them.' Yes, I am sure : no one, I venture to assert, could conceivably have written as these two did over long periods of years unless they were sincerely what they seem, behind and through their work, to be—two of the most lovable men who have ever trod this earth. I still maintain that it is impossible to separate a man's heart and mind from his published works, without losing touch with reality—but I will admit that it is an interesting subject for argumentative, and even controversial, discussion.

★ ★ ★

Guernica, Almeria, Bilbao—and our age is supposed to be civilised !

★ ★ ★

In the last issue of a quarterly magazine devoted to literature the section allotted to poetry included, under the

simple title 'Poem', a piece the first stanza of which runs as follows :—

The shah

*benumbed cats slide over the lawns
like streaming music*

enters

*poised on what o nothing in this contemporary world
the forms of his garden move
bulbs of wishes and swaying balloons of unrealisation flock
darkly about him they pray in the dark*

There are 11 more similar lines divided arbitrarily into three uneven stanzas. It has no punctuation, and appears to have no sense, no rhythm, no point of any sort or kind : at all events, no one to whom I have shown the lines can even suggest the slightest meaning. Here is another, a so-called complete 'poem,' not from the same journal :—

*I swung a leg on the window sill
smoked flicked ash down to pavement
dust dust dead bury dead worms until
all my eye
(and Betty Martin) on Woman as she went*

*skirtfully by
I had been quite a while
goldfish asparagus croton oil
when opposite me one stept
on casual squish and slipped
came down ha-ha with a cry
had she SA I should say not brother
au contraire she might have been my mother
elderly poor too ugly*

I seated above her snugly

*felt you guess right bull contempt for her
so tongued it loudly to hell with surging sentimentality
what we all need you bet
is more and more animality
rootled again for cigarette
blast
I had smoked my last.*

This seems to have slightly more coherence than the first, but can anyone really maintain that either is anything but a competition in lunacy, or are both modern masterpieces? Will the Editor of *Life and Letters To-Day* decide?

★ ★ ★

The Oxford Festival of Spoken Poetry has just closed: it may at least have served to show that Poetry, however neglected to-day, is not dead and can never die. How many competitors read beforehand the last book of one of the judges, Mr. Wallace B. Nichols, entitled *The Speaking of Poetry* (Methuen, 3s. 6d. n.), I did not inquire; but it is certain that all would have been well advised to do so. The publishers call it 'this distinguished little book': publishers seldom err on the side of understatement—they almost have in this case. It is a very distinguished little book: I have seldom come across any which, in addition to dealing with studious knowledge with its main theme, so illuminates the art of poetic composition in addition. Not only speakers of poetry, but writers of it as well, will learn not a little from its thoughtful and authoritative pages.

★ ★ ★

It has been said that no one yet ever changed the course

of history, that even the greatest influencers such as Alexander or Napoleon arose out of their environment to a world ready to receive them. This is indeed a controversial saying ; and yet it is noteworthy how continually circumstances favoured the lives of the great reformers. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, for example, ideas were slowly, very slowly penetrating the consciousness of Man which made possible the astonishing career and success of a woman whose strongest assets were the twin forces of a singularly beautiful character and an extremely quiet, practical, persistent common sense. The recently published life of *Elizabeth Fry*, by Janet Whitney (Harrap, 12s. 6d. n.), has made use, and admirable use, of new material in the shape of letters and family papers : the result is a moving, simple and extremely well-told story of the great reformer who, in Mrs. Whitney's words, 'is the most outstanding example in history of a woman other than royal who accepted marriage and many-times motherhood, and still maintained an active public life. But she is also an example of the difficulty of the double feat.' Both her private and her public life are here fully set forth and both are deserving of continual remembrance—not merely did Elizabeth Fry bring about lasting and tremendous good, but she really, in her modesty and wisdom and simplicity, deserved the eulogy paid her by the Duke of Argyll : 'She was the only really very great human being I have ever met with whom it was impossible to be disappointed. . . . I understood in a moment the story of the prison.' It is the great merit of Mrs. Whitney's book that she makes her readers of a later day understand it also, and much more than the prison, the life of Joseph and Elizabeth Fry and the Quaker strength and limitations.

* * *

Murder is of course to-day the most continual of human

pastimes : the Continent suggests it, our bookstalls confirm it. But, even so, it would seem that we are really going almost too far when so distinguished a firm as Longmans can issue a novel which bears not merely the repellent title of *The Faceless Corpse Murders*, by L. L. Rogger (7s. 6d. n.), but also a wrapper that is a literal delineation in colour of the discovery of a particularly disgusting crime. Within, the story shows a distinct turn of ingenuity towards the end, but by that time the improbabilities have assumed such dimensions that it is difficult to mind who murders whom or why.

A second book from the same distinguished firm is much better reading. Christopher Sykes has a very pretty wit, both in his illustrations and in his narrative—and more than wit : he contrives in *Stranger Wonders* (7s. 6d. n.) not only to show the Englishman abroad but to set him off against the incidents and characters of many places. ‘Invention,’ the longest of the sections, is clever and amusing, but it has neither the punch nor the illumination of many of the others. Of these, the first seems to me the best, a study of German mentality told with the light play and penetrating force of a skilled duellist. An odd book that skips constantly from light-hearted satire to purposeful mordacity, but perhaps none the worse for that.



Books about the joys or humours of living in a cottage in the country are legion, and most of them are terribly self-conscious, the author continually holding himself and his neighbours up as it were and remarking, ‘Look, how funny we are !’ Franklin Lushington does this to a certain extent, and yet, after reading *Pennybridge* (Faber, 7s. 6d. n.), I wish I had read *Pigeon Hoo*, his earlier book on the same

theme, for Mr. Lushington may mean to be funny, but then he is—and he is a good deal more. Whilst he is describing his many arguments and activities with ‘Fenella,’ his long-suffering and rather sarcastic wife, he is also giving a tender and delightful picture of life in the quiet Kentish countryside. He writes with charm and common sense combined, and the resultant blend is of the kind that, if I am not mistaken, readers of CORNHILL will find quite unusually pleasant.

★ ★ ★

A little book that can be recommended for casual reading on holiday, possessing to a marked degree the virtue of ‘dippability,’ is James Turle’s *Out of Doors in England* (Constable, 7s. 6d. n.). It is the third of its kind and I have not read the first two; but there seems to be no reason why there should not be as many as the author has years to live. He has no particular method of wandering, it would seem, any more than of writing; he just wanders and writes as a man might chat, of birds and flowers and trees and lanes and chance meetings and all the really worth-while things—and he is charmingly disingenuous. If he doesn’t want to follow up a topic he drops it; if he doesn’t know about a place or thing he says so; for example, after mentioning half a dozen St. Botoph’s he ends his chapter, ‘I have no doubt there are various other places throughout England named after St. Botoph, but I know nothing about them.’ Another year he might do worse, especially as he mentions St. Botoph’s at Lincoln, than go on to Bottesford (St. Botoph’s Ford) and chat about the loveliness of the Crusaders’ tombs in its church. A happy, simple little book, with many pleasant photographs by W. F. Taylor that will appeal to many lovers of the English countryside.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC, NO. 166.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 28th August.

Dear love, for nothing less than thee
 Would I have broke this happy —— ;
 It was a ——
 For reason, much too strong for fantasy.

1. All treasure's uncertain,
 Then down with your —— !
2. But winter and —— weather
3. Blown in the morning, thou shalt fade —— noon.
 What boots a life which in such haste forsakes thee :
4. The pealing —— swells the note of praise
5. Earth has not anything to show —— fair :
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty :

Answer to Acrostic 164, June number : ' Thy springs and *dying gales* ' (Collins : ' Ode to Evening '). 1. DroppinG (Browning : ' Song from Paracelsus '). 2. AirY reversed (William Allingham : ' The Fairies '). 3. ImmortaL (Keats : ' Ode to a Nightingale '). 4. NonE (Wordsworth : ' Lucy '). 5. GardenS (Coleridge : ' Kubla Khan ').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mrs. Waller, Masongill House, Ingleton, and Mrs. Alfred Rogers, Seymour House, Surbiton, who are invited to choose books, as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1937.

1914.

SEPTEMBER.

LETTERS BY

BRIG.-GEN. H. F. E. AND LADY EDWINA LEWIN.

[*This is the continuation of the letters, the August 15-31 sequence of which was published in the last issue of the CORNHILL. At the date of writing Brig.-Gen. Lewin was Major commanding the 16th Battery of the 41st Brigade R.F.A., 'Old Rooks,' that is, the 16th Field Battery, so called because it was raised in 1795 in 'the Rookery Walk' of Woolwich Arsenal. Lady Edwina was staying at Englemere, Ascot, with her father, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts.*]

Englemere, Ascot.

Tuesday, 1st September, 1914.

Anniversary of Battles of Sedan and Kandahar

Such a lovely day, and so hard to believe there is all this war in France while we sit peacefully here in the verandah. I have all the time the feeling you are riding over from Tweezledown or Aldershot and will be here in a few moments.

Bill and Jean¹ motored over to-day. He and all his Division are getting quite desperate : and I don't wonder, knowing how badly they are wanted elsewhere ! Keeping them here seems so hopelessly stupid, and makes me very angry, for it cannot be necessary now ! Father is urging

¹ *Lieut.-General Sir William and Lady Furse ; he was then Colonel G.S.O. 16th Division.*

that they be sent forthwith. We gather from the scanty news that you must be near Compiègne. The Russians are said to be coming on well, which must help us. The rumour I told you about them is not true, though it has spread far and wide in amazing fashion !

Your story of the gallant airman you saw being shelled in the air by German guns is thrilling ! How splendid of him and wouldn't it be wonderful if it turned out to be 'Pluffles.'¹ Sykie must be very proud of his men.

In action on road near Soucy.

Tuesday 1st.

We are rear-guard battery, but there doesn't seem much doing at present, although rumours are diverse and plentiful. Before I forget, let me tell you a delightful story our doctor told me about the fight we had the other night at Landrecies. Yesterday he was helping a couple of young Coldstream lads who were dog-tired and footsore. They were telling him their experiences of the fighting, and one remarked that he 'an' Bill' somehow in the dark lost touch of their platoon which was in support. They came up the street and there met their Colonel,² who asked them what they were doing. They replied they were trying to find their platoon sergeant. 'The Colonel,' 'e sez, 'don't bother about him. You go down to the barricade there and die like Coldstreamers.' They naïvely remarked, 'What the Colonel said made us feel quite all right. We went down to the barricade and never seemed to think about no bullets and shells' !—the men are really splendid ! The cavalry have done wonders covering our retreat.

¹ Lieut. P. H. L. Playfair, Royal Artillery, now Air Vice-Marshal Playfair ; he had left the battery a year before the War to join the Royal Flying Corps.

² Lt.-Colonel G. P. T. Feilding, D.S.O., Commanding 3rd Coldstream.

Englemere, Ascot.

Wednesday, 2nd.

There is news of more fighting, but we cannot quite make out if you are all in it. I suppose you must keep falling back—even to Paris—but Father tells me not to be disheartened by this: the Germans are moving so fast they may easily make a slip. Euan goes back to Wellington to-day and is to go up for a special examination for Sandhurst and is full of excitement. They are going back early to enable the O.T.C. to get to work.

Father is just back from London. He hears that Major Budworth¹ behaved splendidly on Sunday 23rd, near Mons; in fact, all the Horse Artillery were magnificent. Francis Grenfell² who was there is full of their praise.

On road South of Betz.

Wednesday, 2nd.

Only a very brief line to-day. Some day I will have much to tell you about war! Some of it will be comic, but a great deal that is very much the reverse. We are very tired, but the weather is fine. Your letters seem to take about 10 days to reach me. Apparently they are *uncensored* and unopened.

NOTE.—There had not been much opportunity for letter-writing on 1st or 2nd September—for on 1st September, the day began early with orders to act as rear-guard battery to 4th Guards Brigade and to reconnoitre northwards of the forest of Villers Cottérêts for positions to oppose strong German columns reported to be only a few miles distant. No sign, however, showed for many hours, and it was during this interval that the letter 1st September was begun.

Later, about 9 a.m., orders were received for battery to withdraw to position to cover southern exits of forest of Villers Cottérêts. About 10 a.m., as battery was approaching southern edge of the forest, a burst of rifle fire broke out to

¹ Commanding 'H' Battery R.H.A.

² Captain F. O. Grenfell, V.C., 9th Lancers. Captain Grenfell was mistaken in his identification. 'H' Battery only landed in France on 10th September, 1914. Possibly he meant 'I' Battery.

right and left, and it was reported that strong parties of Jaegers and machine guns in lorries were attacking Coldstream and Irish Guards, then holding north edge of forest. The fighting was fierce and determined. Colonel Morris of Irish Guards was killed early, and Colonel R. Scott-Kerr, Commanding 4th Guards Brigade, severely wounded.

Towards noon fighting died down and withdrawal was resumed. It was, however, interrupted again during early afternoon by sudden fire of unseen German field guns. There was much noise and bursting of shells which caused some confusion on the road crowded with troops about Pisseleux. Little or no damage was done. Some infantry turned about and pushed forward while 16th battery, coming into action away to their left, opened a rapid 'sweep and search' fire. This appeared to cool the German ardour, and march was continued without further interruption until 10 p.m., when troops bivouacked beside road in bright moonlight near Betz.

Englemere, Ascot.

Thursday, 3rd.

I have been made so happy to-day, for Hugh Dawnay, writing to Suse on 31st, said he had just seen you, well and cheery. All seems going well even if you have to retire South of Paris. By then our Divisions from India will, I hope, have joined you. What a different Paris to our happy days last year !

Father and Aileen¹ lunched at Hackwood to-day to meet the Queen of the Belgians, who has brought her children over here at the invitation of Lord Curzon. The Queen intends returning to Belgium, but the children are to remain at Hackwood.

Recruiting is going like wild-fire now, but what a dull-thinking nation we are ! Surely they could long ago have seen that some day we should need an army. Now they are full of patriotism but no men trained !

Pierre-Levée.

Thursday, 3rd.

I saw Hugh to-day. It is refreshing to find someone who can tell one the why and wherefore of what is going on—of

¹ Lord Roberts and his elder daughter, Lady Aileen Roberts.

which we can make nothing in our own little circumscribed sphere of ever-marching units. I sent you a line by him yesterday, but was so dog weary when I wrote, you must not take it at face-value. Pessimism is the devil's poison poured into our hearts to kill our belief in a God in heaven. I never realised this till now when we need our strongest and best faculties to support us.

We have had, as usual at sundown, a German aeroplane reconnoitring over our bivouac. We have no counter aircraft guns, only our rifles to fire at them. They know this and so come every evening in the calmest manner ! It breeds a sense of unrest, for we realise that the enemy thus knows our exact positions and we wonder if it is to be the prelude to a night attack. The Flying Corps have done wonderfully but cannot be everywhere.

What is urgently required is :

1. Aerial guns to deal with opposing aeroplanes. One per battery.
2. Aircraft told off exclusively for co-operation with Artillery.

You give Divisions Cavalry for reconnaissance duties, in the same way you must provide aeroplanes from which gunners can reconnoitre and direct their fire.

An easy march to-day as things go ! Moved off at 6 a.m., and into bivouac at 3 p.m., in a pretty village in a fertile plain. Since Landrecies, powers that be are fearful of our getting into billets ! The people are all continuing to flee before the Germans, killing their fowls and rabbits and driving their cattle before them. It is pathetic.

Wylde¹ on service comes out splendidly. He has been twice most heavily shelled but remains quite unruffled. The dear old boy read me an excellent lecture the other

¹ Major F. W. Wylde, Commanding 9th Battery in 41st Brigade R.F.A.

evening as we marched together. I was weary beyond words and had I suppose shown it in something I said, for he turned to me, 'My dear fellow, you and I at home have tried to stand for religion. If you are not going to let it support and stay you now on active service, why do you make a profession of it in peace?' I saw his argument and felt his rebuke. He's a fine fellow.

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 4th.

There is very little to tell you to-day, for news is scarce.

It seems quite true that the Germans have had to withdraw one Army Corps to meet the Russians, and that their attacking power is lessening. The Russians have gained a great victory over the Austrians near Lemberg. It ended in a regular rout and there is talk of a Slav rising in Hungary. On the other hand the Russians got a bad knock in the Königsberg direction. They are, however, still coming on and their numbers seem unending. I hear the Ulster men promise to be a fine Division. They are already three-parts trained! Arthur Green and his Division ¹ have not yet gone to France.

Le Bertrand near Faremoutiers.

Friday, 4th.

An excellent night last night, no one moving till 6 a.m., I have kept no count of my letters sent to you, but try to write something daily. Our marching has been terrific and you can't imagine how hard it is to keep count of time! Each day is so like the last. Long hours of marching—occasional scrapping—then on again and one gets dog weary and forgetful! The men are splendid the way they stick it. The terrible part of all this war is the poor people fleeing before the Germans, leaving everything they cannot

carry. No trains running to help them. All shops shut. It is pitiable.

We spent most of to-day on rear-guard in 'position of observation' but never had to open fire, and about 4 p.m. we 'followed on' and got to our bivouac about 9 p.m. Last night I got your letter of the 25th.

Once again I want to accentuate this question of defence from enemy air-craft observation. Since early dawn to-day we have been ceaselessly reconnoitred by German aeroplanes. I am entrenching the battery in a rare good defensive position 300 yards behind the crest line. By this time I fear they can account for every unit in our line. Last night one signalled with a light immediately he was directly over us, yet we are unable to fire at or to impede them in any way. I do hope the Little Chief may consider representing the situation to the Powers.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 5th.

Your wee scrap enclosed in Hugh's letter was such a joy this morning, written only three days ago. I am a lucky woman to hear so quickly. Most of the poor wives have not heard yet. Anytime you get a letter through like that, if you mention 'all well in Brigade or Battery' I will pass on the information to those concerned. Hugh says you look fit, though you must often have been dead beat. If only you keep fit I am happy.

Rawly and Merrie¹ are coming to stay to-day, so we hope to have the latest news.

I am convinced we shall win in the long run—we must—but Oh ! if only we had more trained and organised men to pour in against the hordes of Germans. Recruiting is doing

¹ *General Sir Henry and Lady Rawlinson.*

well and the best class coming forward and very soon the New Divisions made up of Battalions from Gibraltar, etc., should be ready. Neville¹ told me an amusing story of a fine strapping young Irishman who came to enlist in Dublin bringing two others with him. His home, he said, was in Howth, and when asked if he had seen any of the gun-running he replied with pride that he had been there and brought his rifle safe into Dublin, despite all the military and police! When asked where it was now, he produced a pawn-ticket! Neville thought we could arm a battalion from the Dublin pawnshops. I do love my countrymen!

A German aeroplane carrying bombs came to grief in the North Sea and was picked up by one of our submarines. It looks like their first attempt to come over and try to drop bombs as they have done on Paris and Antwerp.

Mr. Asquith made a great recruiting speech yesterday—excellent—but it does amuse me to hear him and many of our well-known anti-militarist friends of old days stumping round now preaching blood and thunder. But then one sees red when one remembers all the arrant folly that type has always talked in the past in their wilful blindness and ignorance of facts.

In an orchard somewhere North of Nesles.

Sunday, 6th.

When we got into our dusty and dirty camp by the river yesterday we received a complimentary order from the Div. Commander in which he expressed his 'admiration of' our 'skill and gallantry' in the rear-guard action on 1st. This was followed by orders to advance to-day and we have just had our first successful scrap—or rather our first scrap which

¹ Colonel Sir Neville Chamberlain, Inspector-General Royal Irish Constabulary.

has not been followed by withdrawal. To celebrate the event I am now sitting at my ease under an apple-tree on a glorious Sunday afternoon to have a yarn with you. Poles are 'down,' horses grazing or asleep, men all in much the same condition. At last the French and ourselves appear to have rounded up and headed these infernal Germans who have been bundling us backwards as they liked. It is delightful to feel we have at last had a kick at their retreating figures—although I cannot flatter myself we had much to do with the affair for, try as I would, I could not find a single German gun, they were so well concealed, so we could only search and sweep and grope in the dark, but we finished off with two nice rounds rapid fire at a column which appeared suddenly retiring up a road at a long range of 6,200 yards. These Germans are good gunners and understand their trade, but from smallness of their Artillery fire to-day, I think they were mostly on the move 'for home.'

Yesterday when I got into camp I was determined to get the horses a good bellyful of hay, so after a snack, mounted 'Susan,' and with Trumpeter Staddon rode off to reconnoitre.

About two miles off I turned into the 'cour' of a glorious well-to-do farm. The people were far too busy packing up to haggle about hay. They just told me to help myself, and a railway porter who was hanging about found me an old horse and a cart which he and an old labourer filled with hay and the railway porter, on his way back to the town, led it to the Camp. I watched the poor people packing up. Two enormous wains, each drawn by four magnificent oxen, were in the courtyard, and into these the women were methodically packing all their belongings—some of the best of the furniture, trunks, and paying particular care to the packing of the family 'linge'—an enormous quantity and all looking of the best quality. The two daughters of the

the Germans. The town was inexpressibly filthy and full of stench. They had fouled everything. Dead horses lying about in the street and body of a dead Uhlan : a very old man told me he fell off his horse, he was so drunk. The few people in the place told us they had no bread, wine, or flour left to them.

(*Later, near Petit Villiers.*)

At Le Trétoire, our advance across a river with steep wooded sides¹ was checked by heavy machine-gun fire by which the advanced guard of the Coldstream were roughly handled. A battery also opened on the Column as it entered the village. We groped our way forward going very gingerly, as the enemy machine guns on the opposite bank were impossible to locate and it was not until we were able to man-handle an odd gun here and there into action and plaster the opposite woods with shrapnel, that we could get across. Gerald,² with one of his guns, managed to bag a horse-artillery gun and team as it showed round a corner galloping up the road trying to get away on opposite bank. Our advance was delayed at least four hours by these few cavalry and machine guns, their work excellently carried out. These Germans are undoubtedly fine soldiers and manage the business of war well. Wonderful to tell, not one of us in the battery has been scratched ! I haven't seen the Long-job³ yet. I suppose he is too tightly tied by his telegraph wires. I would give much to see his cheery face once more.

¹ *Le Petit Morin.*

² *Lieut. Gerald Messervy, 16th Battery R.F.A., subsequently killed on 8th October, 1918, near Rumilly, having served continuously through the War in the same battery, which he finally commanded for over a year.*

³ *Major-General Henry Wilson, then Deputy C.G.S. at G.H.Q., afterwards Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, C.I.G.S.*

Englemere, Ascot.

Wednesday, 9th.

You are so right in saying the people in this country ought to have seen the poor fugitives, to have any idea of what war means. Father has been thrilled by your letters and the distances marched, and digging and reconnoitring all the time. He has sent you a coat which he has been asked to get tried by the inventor. If it reaches you keep it, or pass it to someone else to tell us whether the let-down skirt is a good plan.

Villiers-sur-Marne.

Wednesday, 9th.

We came into action early this morning on S. bank of the River Marne, to cover our Infantry crossing about Pavant. No sign of enemy and not a shot fired and after hanging about for over two hours we retired, watered and fed. It was a lovely morning and a glorious view across the river.

We had a great feast of blackberries at our O.P. A day spent hanging about, and yet I feel to-day is big with events, but we know nothing of what is happening. We have not yet fought to-day—ourselves—1 p.m., but there was heavy artillery fire this morning to our left, and last night on our right. I feel that in all probability the whole course of the campaign will hinge on the outfall of to-day's and the next few days' battles. Now all is quiet and our own particular advance arrested, so we have watered and fed and the men and ourselves have lunched. A most unusual function to us all !

I forgot to say the 4th Guards Brigade took 6 German machine guns of the Prussian Guard yesterday evening. They had only left Potsdam 5 days previously. Ronnie managed to bring up two pairs of our wheelers to bring in

the guns, whose horses had been shot and the whole battery was brought up to Brigade Headquarters.

The Irish Guards entertained the German officers to tea. These latter, however, assumed such an arrogant swaggering attitude that Sam and Gerald came up behind me and whispered 'May we kick them?'

Englemere, Ascot.

Thursday, 10th.

India is rising to the occasion in a most wonderful way and seems only too anxious to lavish her money and men on our cause. I must send you the newspaper cuttings about it. From the Dalai Lama upwards and downwards throughout the land. Certainly the Kaiser seems to have killed sedition for us out there!

They are turning the Bordon married quarters into barracks for the new army. Mrs. Lushington¹ is being very kind in going down to see all the women; and then I am to help by writing about them to their new homes.

Chevillon.

Thursday, 10th.

We are in rear of the Column to-day and have had no scrapping, although we hear the Advance Guard have rounded up quite a nice little party of about 400 Germans. Poor chaps! one can't help feeling sorry for them individually. It would be so appalling to be taken prisoner oneself! The subalterns have no such compassion. They are furious with them for the way they have treated the inhabitants and certainly in many cases they seem to have got out of hand of their officers. I think that is the most charitable way to put it—for certainly their conduct has

¹ *Wife of Lieut.-Colonel S. Lushington, then Commanding 41st Brigade R.F.A.*

been what one can only describe as bestial ! To-day has been our first wet day. None too bad, sharp showers. It has made it much better for the infantry marching. We have had a wonderfully peaceful day with much of the old military game of 'waiting'—while the Advance Guard bickers with the enemy Rear Guard. We have, in fact, by 4.30 p.m., had 3 full meals ! An unknown thing before—for we generally eat our breakfast before dawn and dine long after dark. We lunched to-day with table and tablecloth under a tree in a pleasant woodland scene, just as if we were at a race meeting !

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 11th.

The enclosed map is so clear in showing the first of the fighting, that if you have not seen it you may like to have it. Aileen has marked in our two Army Corps. I gather Landrecies was where you told me the Guards were attacked during the night : Father saw Mr. Redmond yesterday. The Home Rule Bill is to be put on the Statute Book on Monday with another Bill saying neither it nor the Welsh Disestablishment Bill are to come into being till the War is over. Then Mr. Redmond wants Mr. Asquith to go over and make his War speech in Dublin and Father to go with them ! Comic things will, thank goodness, never cease !! I love the idea of those three going off together on a recruiting campaign !

The War has also produced a knitting fever and you would have laughed last night to see Mother and Aileen after dinner, sitting very bolt upright, knitting away with pained and anxious looks !

Thank God ! The Germans are once more North of the Marne, and though one dare not be too hopeful, it does

look as if they were wondering if the game was worth the candle !

Father tells me he has written to you, but he is so busy 'I don't like to ask him to write very often. He is thrilled by his appointment to the Dominion troops and he is very busy looking after their needs. It is rather interesting, but we shall soon now have just the number of men under training that the National Service League advocated !

Oulchy le Château.

Friday, 11th.

The latter part of our march to-day was in pouring rain and we are now tucked in by the side of a wood on a hill slope with the mess tarpaulin over us.

Rumours were rife and plentiful this morning. If all were true, the War would be over shortly. One is that Lord Kitchener has organised a wonderful surprise for us which will affect the course of events in marvellous fashion. I am longing to see what it is.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 12th.

If only the papers are correct and the German rout as complete as they talk of, we may hope for better things. They say our 1st and 2nd Divisions have made great captures and that you have driven them 40 odd miles N.E. of Paris. I hope this may be true and that before so very long we may have news of you personally.

Lady Smith-Dorrien has sent Father Sir Horace's rough diary of the fighting between Mons and Paris. It is intensely interesting and so simply told. He must have done grandly, it was wonderfully lucky he was there.

Father rode over to see some of the New Army training

above Camberley. They are terribly short of everything, Officers, N.C.Os, arms, clothing, etc., etc., which makes it terribly hard for those trying to create the army.

Mr. Oliver¹ came to tea. He wants to get his son into Sandhurst. Sir Percy Scott also came. He says the Navy have a number of big guns 6 inch and above, which could easily be fitted out on land-carriages for being dragged, and they ought to be useful.

Courcelles.

Saturday, 12th.

We got in here at 8 p.m., in pouring rain. Horses picketed in a slough, men in a farm close by and we have an outhouse of a labourer's cottage where we are snug with a fine fire of wood. We hear the Cavalry and Advance Guard Infantry had some fighting and took 200 prisoners to-day at Braine.

There was heavy firing on our left to-day. A tremendous cannonade.

Englemere, Ascot.

Sunday, 13th.

So all the rumours are true and once more you have all done great things. Not only driven the Germans back but captured numbers of their guns and transport, and now to make it all perfect I only want to hear of you and what you have done.

Near Vieil Arcy on road S. of R. Aisne.

Sunday, 13th.

Waiting to go into action. We started out at 4.30 a.m.,

¹ F. S. Oliver, author of 'Ordeal by Battle,' published in 1915.
VOL. 156.—No. 933.

the Brigade being detailed to support the Advance Guard. We expected to come into contact soon. The Colonel sent us three Majors to reconnoitre for positions on ground he indicated to us on the map. Ronnie and I went forward together. It took some time to identify the country and our objectives and select the route for, and eventual position of the battery. We had a marvellous panorama of the Valley of the Aisne spread out before us. As we cautiously moved about on the high ground I saw a man peering round a haystack through his field-glasses in the direction I was interested in. I worked up towards him and found it was dear old Gilly.¹ Apparently his appointment at the War Office was just up as War was declared and he promptly got appointed to command 114th Battery in 1st Division.

We at once decided we would come into action alongside each other. However, when I got back to the Battery I found 'powers that be' had changed the plan and an order telling us to stand fast and await orders. That was over 3 hours ago, and we are still here !

There is great pounding going on, on either side of us. It is blowing a gale and rather cold. Heaven grant that all will go well this day for the Allies, for I cannot help praying this war may end quickly although I fear I am only regarding it from my private and the humanitarian point of view. For the Nation, I believe nothing short of a long-drawn struggle will make them awake to their duties and responsibilities. It is just five to 11 now, and I suppose the Little Chief and you all are setting out for church so we shall have your prayers with us. The Cavalry have reported main bridges over river destroyed and enemy entrenched on far height. They had a stiff fight to turn enemy out of the river line.

¹ *The late General Sir Webb Gillman, then Major Gillman.*

Englemere, Ascot.

Monday, 14th.

How can I tell you of my joy in getting your letters 3rd to 9th this morning. I know how hard you must find it to fight down pessimism, when you are dead beat and ever moving in a fog of uncertainty and ignorance. We shall both have learnt a great deal from this war. Lord Airlie¹ I remember in the South African War once told Mabell 'no man or woman had really lived until they had endured the anxieties of a campaign.'

He was right, I am sure, for a woman must have her very dearest away fighting, before she can realise what the fullness of life means. I have passed on to Father what you say about the need of anti-aircraft guns; it must be maddening to be so continually watched by their 'planes. I understand the German change of direction and the commencement of their retreat was due to the appearance of a French army they knew nothing about, on their right. Father had hoped for something of this sort—that the Germans would have their rear threatened and would thus be forced to retire and this has apparently come about.

Thousands of Belgian refugees are over here and are being fed, clothed and housed—poor souls, it is very grim to think what they have gone through.

On road South of River Aisne, near Vieil Arcy.

Monday, 14th.

On Sunday, yesterday, I was told by one of the Staff that the number of British troops engaged exceeded those at Waterloo. It was, in fact, the largest battle British troops have ever been engaged in. I fear our losses were heavy,

¹ Colonel the Earl of Airlie, Commanding 12th Lancers, killed at Battle of Diamond Hill, 11th June, 1900, South Africa.

but the battery never came under fire so we were all right. The honours of the day undoubtedly go to the Infantry who were splendid—simply splendid !

We crossed the river in the morning, but after hanging about for about two hours, I met Johnny Gough and he told me to get back whence we had come and look out to deal with possible counter-attack down Ostel Valley. We have done this, but no further developments and we are still 'waiting.'

Englemere, Ascot.

Tuesday, 15th.

Father was told at the War Office that there are a few anti-aircraft guns ready, and he is pressing for more to be sent out.

On road South of R. Aisne, near Vieil Arcy.

Tuesday, 15th.

The weather has turned wet, which does not help things greatly. However, in spite of being very dirty and all manner of unpleasantnesses, we are all very fit and well—even if we are 'verminous persons' within the meaning of the Act ! We spent a heartbreaking day trying to locate and silence guns shelling the 4th Guards Brigade, but had to desist, as the Cavalry complained our shells were falling on them. I am sure these were from elsewhere and not ours, which I believe were really doing good, for while we fired, there was no shelling of the Guards' trenches.

Englemere, Ascot.

Wednesday, 16th.

Billy Spencer ¹ wrote to me to-day saying his wound was getting on well but he could not yet feel his left foot and

¹ Lieut.-Colonel L. D. Spencer, K.O.S.B., severely wounded at Mons on 23rd August.

was afraid the doctors wouldn't pass him as sound. We have asked him to come here if he has nothing better to do.

The Germans seem to be making their stand now and one does so pray we may break their line. I am so sorry about General Findlay's¹ death. We hoped at first it was a false rumour. Aileen is very busy with the hospital which is to be opened at the Grand Stand next week.

On road South of River Aisne, near Vieil Arcy.

Wednesday, 16th.

The battle drags on. I believe we are merely meant to hold our ground so it resolves itself into a game of Artillery long-bowls in which, as we are in reserve, we do not even take part. We have had a wonderful day and night of rest. We actually slept in a house last night—marvellous—a mattress on the floor and luxuries like that! and were very comfy, although we haven't seen our valises or a change of clothes for over a week.

I hear Bill Furse has arrived out and that he and his lot were moved up to assist us last night. It is coming out a lovely day after a wet night, and now in early morning it is a most beautiful scene laid out before me. One day we will re-visit it together with Long-job to tell us the story. I shall never be able to tell you anything, for I am ignorant of everything!

Englemere, Ascot.

Thursday, 17th.

What a desperate time you are all having. We were told last night that our aeroplanes report that the Germans are falling back though still holding the line of the Aisne. I suppose a rear-guard action while the main body retreats.

¹ Brig.-General Niel D. Findlay, C.B., C.R.A., 1st Division B.E.F.

If only we can hold on now and force them back and break through their line on our right we might cut off the Crown Prince's Army. Father is seeing Lord K. to urge the necessity for aeroplane guns. He is going to the War Office to-morrow. The Bishop¹ wrote and told me he had heard of you from a wounded Gunner officer as being well on the 11th; it was so dear of him to write. He is in No. 11 General Hospital on the line of Communications but longing to be up with you all. We are having cold days with rain and I so dread the same thing going on with you, it will make it so horrible.

The Belgians are bringing out an Official report of the German outrages. If half true the latter must be devils. I couldn't read it, it is so awful.

Our Hospital at the Grand Stand is to be open next week, and the Matron, such a nice woman, is staying here now. Ascot is full of excitement about it, also over some Belgians who have arrived. A house has been taken and about thirty of the poor souls are to be lodged there. It is all very pitiful and one is so sad for them having lost most of their belongings and all their worldly goods.

Near Vieil Arcy.

Thursday, 17th.

We had a penitential day of heavy driving rain from West. Took up our position before daylight and remained there till dark. We were told that the Cavalry who had taken over part of the front, in front of us, were hard pressed and could we help? We could see no German movement and very little German shelling, so it was difficult to know what to do. We are still watching this left flank and the Ostel Valley.

¹ *Bishop Gwynne, Bishop of the Sudan.*

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 18th.

We are just longing for more news—for this awful fight goes on, and though we must win in the end ‘for our right and great cause,’ still the end seems far and we long for good news daily. I can’t believe the Germans can go on with these awful losses. They have lost thousands not only in the West—but against the Russians and even their men sent to help the Austrians have suffered badly.

Near Vieil Arcy.

Friday, 18th.

The rumour about Russians that you told me has been very generally believed, I fancy—the wish being father to the thought!

Yes, of course, we shall win in the end. We must: but we may have to endure many disappointments, reverses, retreats, hopes and fears, before the end comes. I keep saying to myself, remember how our forefathers tramped up and down in the Peninsula, backwards and forwards, Lisbon to Badajos, back to Torres Vedras, on to Madrid, and back to Portugal. We may have to do much the same again. Napoleon said it was the ‘Spanish ulcer’ which sapped his strength, and, as A’Court¹ says—‘We have to do the “stonewalling” and Russia the “steamrollering.”’ If *le bon Dieu* is gracious the steam-roller will flatten straight away, but if not—then we must be grim and hang on. It will be terrible, but it is all we can do; and if it is to be so, I am convinced that the increased effort which will be required will arouse the Nation to its responsibilities. Up till lately they have regarded it purely as a matter for the professional soldier class to deal with. If the War finishes

¹ Lt.-Col. A. C. Repington, the military critic.

soon we alone will have been affected and the moral effect on the Nation will be negligible.

I am indeed amused to hear our pacifist friends are now enthusiastic recruiters. It is only just over a year ago when talking to some of them at Englemere, I referred to the 'German menace'; they grew very superior and said that really in the twentieth century we soldiers might give some weight to the fact that the doctrine of Jesus Christ had now been preached for twenty centuries and we were not likely to revert in a day to the theories of the Middle Ages!! Poor souls! I would to God they had been right.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 19th.

Father has just been up, to say he is sending up an express to the War Office for the bag, so I must write a short line. We have little news, and are just pegging away at the hospital and at everyday life—knitting hard to try to get some warm things ready for the men before the cold begins.

Captain Grayson has written in wild spirits as he has got orders to hold himself in readiness to go out and is glad the dull training is over. Lord and Lady Selborne came to tea yesterday. Father showed them his big French map, on which one can follow you step by step.

There are rumours we have help coming from the north of the Germans and do hope we squeeze them between our people and the new arrivals. I wonder if it is true?

Near Vieil Arcy—Aisne.

Saturday, 19th.

I have not seen Hugh for days. Stuck out on a flank as we are, we are not likely to. We sometimes feel greatly 'in the Blue.' I must try and get this to Johnnie Gough,

he is always cheery and cordial whenever we meet and steps aside to tell me how things are going. I fancy he is invaluable to his Chief¹ and much relied upon by him. Yes, Stephen Cawley gone! I only heard of it from you, though I noticed the other day he was not with his Brigade. He knew no fear and was brave to a degree. He is a great loss. I must learn particulars.

We all continue flourishing and well. Our infantry throughout this battle have been splendid. The way they have stood up and taken punishment is marvellous. The Guards, as usual, are perfectly wonderful. Some of our batteries too have had a bad time. The Little Chief's letter has not reached me yet.

If you could send out for the men, matches (Bryant & May, small boxes) and cigarette papers, they will be greatly appreciated, for both are unprocurable. Even the poor country folk ask us for them. They can get nothing in a country over which two armies and three Nations are fighting on a front of 100 miles! Isn't it an appalling thought! The men would also like notepaper and envelopes, but as I have to censor, read through, and sign, every letter, I am a bit doubtful about suggesting the latter! Later on knitted gloves will be popular. My only trouble is my wet feet. They feel like frogs! but I am getting quite used even to this.

Such a peaceful, still, calm evening! The daylight is closing in. Not a sound over the wide scene! then suddenly a flicker down the valley, followed by a flash and explosion, showing where the shrapnel are bursting—only an occasional one now and then: just enough to show that men fiends like William Hohenzollern are at their work! God bless you.

¹ Ist Corps Commander General Sir Douglas Haig.

*Englemere, Ascot.**Sunday, 20th.*

Such praise as I hear on all sides of the way every arm in the 1st Army Corps has behaved. When all one's heart is with a unit it is indeed good to hear such praise.

What appalling rain you must be having ! Father was over at Aldershot yesterday with Colin Mackenzie¹ who is commanding one of the first of the new Army Divisions which is to go abroad. He says it will be six months before they are ready—of course there are still two more regular Divisions and the Indian troops—but it shows how hopelessly unprepared we were !

This is Aileen's² birthday, so I have given her £2 from you and me for the hospital.

*Near Vieil Arcy—Aisne.**Sunday, 20th.*

To-day has been very cold with sharp hail showers. The situation seems just the same. Our infantry have repelled various assaults with splendid steadiness, frequently counter-attacking with the bayonet. Unfortunately I have seen none of these, as they have been mostly at night : also, unfortunately, we have been able to assist them very little, for there are no Artillery positions from which we can bring really effective fire. However, they seem to keep their ends well up without us ! Ronnie has just telephoned up to me—I am at my observing station, half a mile from the battery—that Hugh has just left a waterproof coat for me. Thank you. It arrives in nick of time, for my mackintosh with all this hard wear is nearly done. My hand is so cold I can't write more at present !

¹ Major-General Sir Colin Mackenzie.

² Lady Aileen Roberts, Commandant Ascot Red Cross Hospital.

Englemere, Ascot.

Monday, 21st.

Father is asking Colonel Peake¹ to send out your yellow glass things through the War Office bag and I will order to-day the telephone cells and hope they can also go by the bag.

I hear America is trying to exchange prisoners for us, the French, and the Germans. I hope Mr. O'Rorke will thus be released. The newspapers have at last mentioned the developing movement on our left, so I suppose we may now refer to it. I wonder where the French were able to find these new troops? I hope Kluck's Army gets squeezed between you and them. I think everyone in England has begun to suffer from the War either through their pockets, or hearts. The spirit among them is quite different:—no boasting—only a grim determination through all classes. A wonderful unselfishness displayed everywhere. You will find a different country to that you left.

Near Vieil Arcy.

Monday, 21st.

I am not happy about our communications with the Infantry and have had a long day trying to see what can be done. If you get across the river to observe from the Infantry positions, the width and openness of the Valley make it almost impossible to control your battery. If you stay where you can control fire you are out of touch with the Infantry. The only solution I can see is three miles length of shell-proof telephone wire!

¹ Colonel Malcolm Peake, then A.A.G. Royal Artillery at War Office, subsequently killed in action 28th August, 1917, when Commanding Royal Artillery 1st Corps. It had been reported that with yellow-tinted glass fitted to our field-glasses it was easier to pick up the flash of enemy gunfire. It cannot be said that the expedient proved a success.

Englemere, Ascot.

Tuesday, 22nd.

We got a very cheering message yesterday from Hugh saying things were looking better than they had done for the last twelve days. Can it be the Germans are falling back at last? Cyril tells Nora that the health of the men in the Fleet is wonderful—only about nine sick instead of the usual 100 or so.

Father made an appeal in the Press for Field-glasses for use of Non-commissioned officers and officers who cannot afford expensive binoculars, and hundreds are now pouring in. If any of your people want any, let me know and I will see the application goes in. The news is better to-day and I am so hopeful—oh may we see the end of all our sorrows. The enclosed cutting will explain the Russians to you. It is by Leo Maxse and in his usual amusing vein.

Near Vieil Arcy.

Tuesday, 22nd.

The main news to-day is that it has stopped raining and we are thawing and getting dry, otherwise there is no news.

Englemere, Ascot.

Wednesday, 23rd.

I have heard of you again through Hugh, that you are well, and that makes me so glad. The land news yesterday was so cheering, but the poor Fleet suffered—three cruisers, the *Cressy*, *Aboukir*, and *Hogue*, being sunk by submarines. We sunk two of the latter and are after the others, but it makes one shudder—how I hate the sea. I am trying to get woolly gloves made. Mrs. Lushington and I are getting a collection together and hope that some

day they will reach the Brigade and be of use. Very little news to-day, for Father is in London and we must await his return.

Near Vieil Arcy.

Wednesday, 23rd.

The situation remains unchanged. Otto¹ and I have been away across the valley to see the Guards in an effort to establish telephone communication with them. Otto has managed to get hold of some wire and has now established it right across. A very good piece of work. I was very glad to see all the infantry arrangements and their trench line. When the history of this battle comes to be written I believe the feat performed by our infantry will rank with the finest exploits of the British Army for dogged endurance and resolution.

While we were up there Otto and I were peering about looking for points on to which we could fire, and their snipers kept giving us an occasional bullet into the trees behind. At last they got annoyed, for they loosed off a small shrapnel which fairly made us put our heads down. I have got a bullet from this which went into the clay bank above us, as a memento for you. It did us no harm beyond making us get very muddy and dirty crawling away on our tummies in very wet trenches! Don't be alarmed! It is not my daily practice to encourage 'Ally-mans', as the men call them, to direct their fire on me! Quite the reverse.

Our life now is really very odd. We man the Guns, and I get to my observing station before daylight. We sit there, firing at slow intervals at extreme ranges at any

¹ Lieut. O. Lund, orderly officer 41st Brigade R.F.A., now Lieut.-Colonel O. Lund, D.S.O.

Germans we may see or at their trenches. No shell-fire comes our way—why, we can't make out, for there seems plenty for everyone else ! I almost think we must be beyond the range of their Guns. And yet they have big siege howitzers which shell the infantry unmercifully. They are, however, so well dug in that they report they do very little harm ! At night we can do nothing, so we leave a guard at the Guns, and we, and most of the men, turn into the little labourers' cottages in rear where we have our valises and sleep on the floor and dine at a table ! It seems almost wrong when one thinks of what the infantry are enduring in their caves and trenches, but what else can we do ? So we take the blessing given us and are thankful.

Englemere, Ascot.

Thursday, 24th.

Our hospital at the stand is to open next week and we are all busy—even Mother with her knitting, which really is a fearful labour for her !

We have no news to-day, only that you are all clinging on to your positions and slowly driving the Germans back. Oh for more troops to send you to help. One feels so powerless. The Japanese are sending ships to the Bay of Bengal to do a bit of chasing of a German Cruiser which sunk some of our merchant vessels. The account of the sinking of our ships showing the discipline of the crews is fine. Two Ascot boys were in them. One, a midshipman in the *Cressy*, was picked up after being $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours in the water and is none the worse—the other, alas, was drowned. Joseph¹ also had a brother on board who was saved. Fred Browning's brother² got a hole in his ship. Seeing a

¹ Joseph Macdonald, late Rifle Brigade, Lord Roberts's valet.

² Admiral Sir Montague Browning, G.C.B.

submarine he went straight for her periscope and sank her, and then got his ship safe to harbour. They have all been splendid, our men on land and sea !

Near Vieil Arcy.

Thursday, 24th.

I spoke too soon ! Yesterday they found us out ! It began with light howitzer fire, but later they changed to enormous stuff, the men call it 'coal-boxes,' which make craters fifteen feet across and ten feet deep. There was no chance to reply to this as they arrived quite out of the blue, so I withdrew detachments from the Guns and awaited events. Ronnie had an exciting time at the wagon line, as they later on found him out and he had some narrow shaves before he got them shifted and stowed away singly in the woods. Marvellous to relate we had no casualties to either men, horses or equipment. We shifted battery position as soon as it was dark and could get teams up. It has turned fine to-day.

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 25th.

Father and Aileen are off for a ride to see some of the men training. So many people in France are writing to Father pointing out that the first and vital need is to maintain the Divisions in France at full strength and not to retain officers and men at home solely to create more new Divisions. But it is a difficult job to tackle Lord K., so of course it has been given to the Little Man to do, and we are all scratching our heads as to the best way to carry it through !

Near Vieil Arcy, Aisne.

Friday, 25th.

Just a line to say all well with the Brigade up to to-day and all flourishing. I feel sure we are in for a winter campaign, so it behoves people at home to be in time with warm clothing. Well, well! It will at last reach the Country if 'tis to be so. At present it is only the service-folk who have realized what this war means. The soldiers have cried like voices in the wilderness all these years only to be pooh-poohed by the Pacifists! It is sad to hear of the recruits lacking instructors. It is hard to believe they can ever equal our present men. The Infantry in front of us the other day, when told they would be relieved in their trenches by fresh troops, replied 'Thank you! We only leave these trenches to advance.' Splendid!

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 26th.

We have been up at the Hospital all morning getting things straight. I know you won't mind, but I have lent our bedsteads for the wards and nurses, and some of the furniture. We can have them all back some day, and in the meantime they will be more useful in the Hospital than being in storage. The Ascot people are playing up splendidly and the Red Cross detachments working away hard. They are all cleaning and scrubbing until the Grand Stand looks like a new pin and the wards so bright and nice.

Rawly has got the 4th Division in place of General Snow. He is delighted. General Snow had an accident, but is getting on all right.

Near Vieil Arcy, Aisne.

Saturday, 26th.

To-night we are having a roasted goose which Anne has somehow bought ! Forgive so much talk of food, but one is always hungry and a meal is one of the bright spots in the day ! Now that we are sitting still we seem to be making up for lost time by the amount we eat ! We have now got some Pom-Poms out to act against aeroplanes, but they are a poor weapon for the job.

I wonder who it was who said aero-guns were not required : I should like him to be in a battery over which a German aeroplane has just dropped a smoke-ball. You then know you are in for a warm time in a quarter of an hour. I hear they have a really good effective gun at home, but it is being hoarded for protection of home ports ! Another thing which Ronnie and I feel requires taking up energetically is aeroplane observations for Artillery, and I am glad to hear from Bill, who looked us up last night, that he has written strongly on this point to the Little Chief.

I went over and had tea this afternoon with Arthur Green¹ at his Brigade Headquarters. He was very cheery and glad to be up at the front again. I found him just returned from 'a stroll through the trenches,' a long pole he had cut in the wood in hand, and quite unarmed, and he said he had done a little amateur 'Spy-hunting' on his way down through the woods. I remarked that being unarmed perhaps it was as well he encountered no Spy. 'Well, that struck me also as I came along !' They are in the trenches giving relief to one of our Brigades. He is of the same way of thinking as I am. The country, he maintains, may be very much awake to its duty, but if the war ends soon they will, he feels sure,

¹ My cousin, Major A. D. Green, Bde.-Major 17th Infantry Bde. killed in action next day.

forget their fright and their lesson, as they did after the South African War, and will take pride in the fact and say 'we have muddled through again. Now that the Germans are done with we can afford to reduce our Army.' At present it is only the professional soldier who is fighting. Not the Nation. If they were over here they would see a Nation at war and realise what it means and the sacrifice it entails. Compare the lot of our people with those of the poor flying Belgian and French families we have seen. Let them see the burnt and sacked villages and farms, peopled only by women and old men, all with sad eyes, and each with husband, sons, brothers away 'sous le drapeau.' Then they will know what war means. Now what do they know? The price of bread has not risen in England. Here they can get none at all! In most places in England you would hardly know a war was in progress. No, England has not yet paid a ha'penny of Blood-tax.

We hope this enveloping movement will come off, but cannot but think the Germans have a counter to it, for they are not fools at War. We had altogether a great buck, he was in great heart and amusing as usual.

Englemere, Ascot.

Sunday, 27th.

We are just back from church and I must write to you. The 7th Division, commanded by General Tommy Capper, is just starting or is gone, so there will be more help for you, and the Prime Minister announced that Indian troops had reached Marseilles. Bill has written to Father, saying how badly you want observers to help the Artillery fire, and he asks for R.E. balloons and kites, as there won't be enough aeroplanes—so the Little Man will again do what he can to represent the matter. Mrs. O'Rorke has arrived. She is

so plucky but has heard nothing of him, so Father is trying to get news through the American Embassy for her.

Arthur Lee¹ came over yesterday. He has recovered from his appendix and is now longing to get back to the army. They have fitted up Chequers as a most perfect hospital for officers, and Ruth and Faith² are longing to be of some use. I hear General Fitz-Clarence is going out to command the 2nd Brigade. Clive³ looked in here yesterday. The King and Queen are down at Aldershot for two days viewing the new army.

Aisne.

Sunday, 27th.

For the past 3 days the battery has been withdrawn from our own Brigade and has come entirely under orders of the Corps. We are leading a peaceful and lazy life. I have made up a little parcel of the bullet which I got out of the shrapnel which they loosed off at Otto and me the other morning in the Irish Guards trenches, together with collar-badges and shoulder-strap off a German guardsman's coat. Hugh rolled up this morning with the yellow glasses. They fit perfectly on my Field-glasses. Thank you so much for so promptly arranging the matter and give my best thanks to the Little Chief and Malcolm Peake for their share in the matter. The collar-maker is now stitching a case for them on to my Field-glass case. Thank you for the leather waistcoat brought me by Hugh's ducal chauffeur. He is a sportsman, and has had his car fitted with an anti-aeroplane gun. Why don't other rich young bloods do

¹ Lt.-Colonel Arthur Lee, M.P., late Royal Artillery, afterwards Viscount Lee of Fareham.

² Lady Lee and her sister.

³ Colonel Lord Wigram.

the same? If they would go to Armstrong or Vickers and have it fixed on their cars and then come out here they could have the time of their lives hunting up these German aeroplanes. Pheasant shooting will seem very tame to them afterwards.

Aisne.

Monday, 28th.

We were moving into position last night with a view to checking a possible German counter-attack moving down the Ostel valley, and are now overlooking the village of Presles, which is beneath us. My O.P. is a charming sylvan spot, well in front, and we all have—Battery and O.Ps—caves in the sandstone to live in. Ronnie has taken the wagon lines far back to woods near a farm called Mont Hussard above Courcelles. He has no light job to keep us supplied with water, rations, and ammunition, for there is no road up to me or the Battery.

Such a topping little rough-haired terrier has attached himself for the past three days to us. He is quite well bred and young, such a jolly little fellow. The men have called him 'Joffre.' I do hope he will stick to us.¹

I certainly hope the Little Chief will be able to persuade Lord K. to send us out reinforcements and not to wait until his new Divisions are trained. Make us up to 9 good seasoned Divisions, say 4 Army Corps, draft these up to any strength you like, making them numerically as strong again as they are now—the Staff and Administration can easily deal with increased numbers—and the new men will fall in beside the seasoned ones under officers all of whom know

¹ This little terrier stayed with Captain Carrington until late in 1917, when he was killed by a stray shell.

the game, and they will drop into place and be at once useful ; but new divisions, new men, new staff, new artillery, it all looks like courting disaster. The Japs never sent up new Divisions, they merely enlarged and built up continually those they first sent into the war. The wisdom of this showed itself here the other day when new Brigades, just out from home, were pushed into the trenches. The first two nights they were there the firing was greatly increased and their casualties more. These too were fully trained troops.

We are shaking down very comfortably in our new position. I actually shave every day, and to-night I had my second bath within a week ! See what luxury I live in ! ' Susan ' and ' Belmont ' are both well but terribly bored with war, which they hate ! I held a short parade service yesterday and at the close Ronnie insisted on our singing God save the King. He led us off three notes well above our possible scale !

For the past week the weather has been fine again, but to-night it looks like coming on to rain.

Englemere, Ascot.

Tuesday, 29th.

Lord Kitchener told Father yesterday we might expect some news to-day or to-morrow in connection with the turning movement on our left. The Germans appear to have got up their reinforcements and are pushing on to the North-West. However, I gather the French have now got further round to the left and we may hope for good news. Lord K. promised the Little Man he would not worry about sending out his army but would concentrate all his efforts on keeping up the supply for the standing army.

*Aisne.**Tuesday, 29th.*

During our slack moments Ronnie and I have been watching our heavy guns shooting with wireless directions. It is most interesting. There is a small installation or wireless beside the guns, and far away out of sight, flying over the enemy's big guns, is the observing aeroplane. The wireless operator beside the guns says 'Stand by,' and then 'Fire!' Then comes back the message in a few seconds 'Short, line.' Then another shot—'Over, line.' Then another shot—'Range, a little to left,' then later comes the simple message 'Range.' Then 'Coming in, plenty of shells,' and in a few minutes, perhaps not more than two, you see a speck on the horizon coming back. All this time, owing to the long range of our guns (they are firing at over 9,000 yards) we have been in absolute safety, not a shell within a mile of us, hidden as we are far back behind the crest line. Then the airman comes down and tells us what we have been firing at, a big gun in a large emplacement and he says we hit one of their wagons. You ask 'What about yourself?' 'Oh, they were firing at me all the time with their air-guns. At last they got my range and their shells burst all round me. As I was 7,000 feet up, and could go no higher for observing purposes, I thought I might come home. They very nearly got me as I came.' Isn't that splendid! Of course with us we should not want such accurate direction to spray opposing infantry with shrapnel, and I hope our airman would be safer, but we must have something of this sort. Tell the Little Chief all this.

Everyone in the Brigade very flourishing. The box of chocolates is very popular and fast vanishing!

Englemere, Ascot.

Wednesday, 30th.

Father's birthday. For two hours I have been opening letters, and began to think I should never get time to write to you. Such shoals from all over the world, and telegrams galore. Your little parcel has just come safely. What a beastly jagged thing the bullet is—how grateful I am you were safe—and the shoulder-strap, etc., will make a nice addition to our collection. Thank you so much for them.

A lady here has given me rooms for some of the married women who have to turn out of married quarters for the new army. These will be very useful.

Yesterday Father went with the King to Sandhurst. About 200 boys going out to-day, and then they will be turning them out in batches every 3 months. I am sorry for the men left behind to teach, and yet there must be good men to do this. Father keeps impressing on the authorities the need for guns for aeroplanes (to shoot at them), and they are trying to make Horse Artillery guns elevate to an angle which they think will be useful. He is also insisting on kites and balloons for artillery observation.

(To be continued.)

THE ARAN ISLANDS.

BY C. C. VYVYAN.

THE Aran islands, not to be confused with Arran Island in the Firth of Clyde, nor with Aran Island that lies south-west of Bloody Foreland off the coast of Donegal, are a considerable group of three islands lying about thirty miles south-west from the town of Galway. The largest one, Inishmore, is only nine miles from the coast of Connemara and the smallest one, Inishere, is something under nine miles from the coast of Clare; yet communication with the mainland is uncertain and the short passages by hooker, by curragh or by steamer are often rough and sometimes impracticable. Westerly gales reach Aran direct from America, and if one is staying on any of these three islands the neighbourhood of America across that space of the Atlantic is much more vivid in one's consciousness than the neighbourhood of those Clare and Connemara mountains that are often veiled in mist and cloud.

A bi-weekly steamer plies between Galway and Kiltonan, the port of Inishmore, but its movements are conditioned by weather and by tide, so that a scheduled time-table can have no practical use. Indeed, time does not exist at all on Aran; there are, it is true, dawn and sunset, winter storm and summer sun, a season for planting and a season for digging up potatoes, a season when fish may be hauled from the sea alive and a season when salt fish must be taken down from the rafters and eaten; but there are no appointed hours—one simply works or talks until one is hungry and there is never any hurry to anticipate what is bound to

come. If you should be storm-bound on Inishmore while staying at the western end of the island, at Bungowla or at Onaght or Kilmurvy, and should be desirous of returning to Galway by steamer at the first opportunity, there is only one course of action to be pursued. You take your baggage, by side-car or on your shoulders, all the way down the stony road to Kilronan, and there you sit in the post office or in the public-house awaiting the steamer that may or may not come, and this performance you repeat each day until it does come.

If you enquire at the post office : ‘ Will she come to-day ? ’ you will get this oracular reply : ‘ We cannot tell for sure. If she doesn’t come they’ll telegraph, and if she has already started out from Galway she may not be able to make it to-day and then she may put back when she is half-way across.’ If the day should be at all foggy and visibility about Kilronan harbour should be poor, then deep calculation on the import of this news from the post office will convince you that, if she does not come, the telegram announcing her non-arrival may not arrive until it is actually time to watch for her bows looming up in the fog if she does arrive. In any case you go on to the public-house and remain seated there with your baggage. The Irish habit of indirect statement is firmly rooted on Aran. Often some old woman from Bungowla at the far west of the island will walk eight miles to the harbour to meet this steamer that may or may not come and then she will walk the eight miles back, with never a bite nor sup between her departure and return.

It is remarkable what a sturdy and handsome race are bred on these islands with a very spare diet to support them. The chief items of their nourishment are potatoes, bread and tea—potatoes soft and mealy with a wonderful flavour ;

bread made at a moment's notice without any yeast and cooked in an iron pot that is called an oven and that hangs on a hook above the fire, with small pieces of red-hot turf placed upon the lid of the oven to provide heat above as well as below for the baking ; and tea brewed strong and left to stew by the turf fire. The island bread is excellent when fresh or stale ; it is made of white and brown flour mixed, with a pinch of salt and a pinch of bran, sour milk and a little bicarbonate of soda. They eat also fish and butter and occasionally a stew of mutton, while nowadays the Government supplies them once a week with beef, but the majority of these hardy island people have been reared without meat. The men on Inishmore are very handsome and many have faces grand as those of Arab sheikhs or ancient prophets, but the women are less remarkable, while on Inishmaan, the middle island, the women are better looking than the men.

Nearly thirty years ago these islands won notoriety, of a purely literary kind, when Synge brought out his little work of art, *The Aran Islands*. The work is quite unlike our modern travel books with their know-all indexes and clarity and precisely tabulated facts ; it is formless as the rocks and mountains that endure are formless, it is full of truth, of quiet, penetrating beauty. It had a message then, as it has a message now, for the lover of literature but none for the cheap tourist, and so the Aran islands remained unspoiled.

Then, only a few years ago, came Robert Flaherty to make the 'Man of Aran' film, and to-day that too, with all its excitement and novelty and the money spent in the islands and the visits of the film-star islanders to London and America, has become a thing of the past, and the people, only disturbed a little and enriched a little nowadays by

the summer tourist traffic, are settling down into their ancient ways.

Change, or what men call progress, does of course come to Aran, but as yet it comes slowly; there is a wireless set on Inishmore, and one car, and a small hotel, and the girls are adopting city clothes and shoes and thin stockings; but still the people speak the Gaelic and lead a strenuous, Spartan life, and wrest a living from the sea and from the limestone rocks, and keep alive their ancient songs and stories, told and retold in long winter nights beside the glowing fire of turf; and despite the priests and churches and their own outward show of piety, they still cherish the very ancient beliefs and still are swayed by the very ancient fears of their Pagan ancestors. Indeed, it is probable that more Gaelic is spoken in the islands to-day than thirty years ago, for Gaelic only is now taught in the schools and the Government gives a bonus to any family whose children grow to maturity without a knowledge of English.

The group of islands is known in history as 'Aran of the Saints.' Saint Enda, a very early Christian, came and settled here in order to find solitude; he was followed by many disciples, and after a time the islands became a centre for religious training. Saint Columba himself was one of those who sojourned in Aran, and in the centuries that followed his death innumerable pilgrims came flocking over from the mainland. There are many early Christian ruins still to be seen in the islands and in one group of ruins, known as the 'Seven Churches,' there is an inscription on a stone: 'Septem Romani.' Not all the wise men of to-day can tell us who those seven Romans were, nor what they did, nor why and when they came to Aran.

There are pre-Christian ruins also; Druid graves; and duns or pagan forts; and cloghauns or beehive-dwellings.

The finest of these forts is Dun Aengus, built on the edge of a cliff that rises to-day three hundred feet sheer from the waves. No doubt it once was circular, but as the cliffs have been worn away with the ravages of wind and water through the ages the fort is now shaped like a horseshoe looking out to sea. It has three tiers, like those in an amphitheatre, of rough grey stones, and there are stone stairways built at intervals to lead up from one tier to another. Outside the horseshoe there is a cruel *chevaux de frise* of grey stone slabs set in the earth at all angles, each one ready to cut like a knife. The whole fort gives one a very strange impression; one is vividly aware of a great conception behind the enormous dimensions of this building, behind the proportions of each curve and the symmetry of each terrace, and yet, when examined closely, the fort appears to be nothing more than a collection of one rough stone piled on another, like a dump awaiting by some roadside the hammer of the stone-breaker. It is as if gnomes had been at work here under the direction of supermen or deities.

The cliff is slightly overhanging, for the pounding waves have done their work upon its base and are slowly making caverns there. Dun Aengus is a noble fort and seen at sunset time it inspires awe, but when a gale blows from the south or west it is more than awesome, it is terrifying, for then there rolls up from far below a sound like titanic thunder in the bowels of earth and sea.

But, rich as Aran is in prehistoric ruins and prehistoric legends, it is not like some dead language, just a happy hunting-ground for scholar and historian, it is not like a little kingdom living on the reputation of heroes buried long ago; there are heroes living now and dying now on Aran, people who do not cease the agelong conflict of the

islanders with poverty and danger. One of these same men has told the story of their lives in a book just recently published (*Hero Breed*, by Pat Mullen). In this book, which is a veritable saga, the writer declares his island faith in a single phrase: 'As far as I can see the qualities above all others that can get anybody everything on the Islands are physical strength and courage in the men, and beauty and kindness in the women.'

Always in the education of these people there have been two great forces, the stones of their land and the storms of their sea. Aran is perhaps, with the exception of Montenegro, the stoniest land in the world. There are no hedges of earth or thorn, every field, enclosure or cabin has a fence of grey stones loosely piled on one another; often it is a fence without any gap at all, so that if a man wishes to enter his field the quickest way is to pull down the stones; then when he leaves it he will build up the gap again in two minutes. But the stony nature of Aran does not begin and end with fences, for the very fields themselves are little else but rock, and often if you look into a small enclosure expecting to see a crop of rye-grass or potatoes, you will see only grey slabs of rock, flat as any pavement, with a fissure here and there that gives root-hold to a bramble, or to a tuft of grass, or to a stunted thorn no bigger than a piece of herbage. These are the fields of the future, but every inch of them must be contested.

First of all the rock must be broken up and then, basket-load by basket-load, the soil must be brought and laid on the stony surface of the land. The baskets or straddles are double panniers fixed on the backs of donkeys or of horses, and often a man will ride behind these baskets sitting without stirrups or saddle sideways on the rump of the horse. The soil consists of three ingredients: first, there is the kelp

thrown upon the beaches by the tide, luminously brown, rich harvest of the sea ; secondly, there is sand, but this must be carefully chosen, for some kinds of sand are sterile, while one dark grey variety has fertile qualities ; the last and rarest item is clay, and fortunate is that islander who can find somewhere a pocket of this indispensable stuff. Once it has been laid, a shallow layer of this island soil will grow first-class potatoes.

It is clear that life on shore in Aran must, in such conditions, breed Spartan characters. A living must be wrested from the soil and nature gives little help in the process and only the toughest of raw materials ; indeed, it seems almost impossible to believe that such spare conditions can exist in the same universe with the lush, untilled, festering growth of a tropical jungle. But if the land work calls for hardihood and patience and endurance, fostering all the sterner qualities of the human race, the call of the sea is even more insistent.

There are two types of vessel used between Aran and Ireland. There is the Galway hooker, a one-masted fishing smack used for shipping horses and cattle, pigs and sheep to and fro between the islands and the mainland, also for taking turf from Connemara to Aran, where there is neither turf nor firewood, and also used, until quite recently, for taking over poteen from the illicit stills of Connemara to the islands when any special celebration was to take place, or when some islander was rich enough to pay for a few gallons of this highly flavoured and highly valued drink. These boats usually have very dusky sails, and beautiful as any pageantry of colour is the sight of one dark sail in Galway Bay, outlined in a grey dawn on the grey hills of County Clare ; that note of black on silver is like a trumpet note breaking into silence.

The other craft is a much smaller and more primitive affair. This is the black canvas curragh, eighteen feet long by three or four feet wide, manned by three or four men each taking a pair of oars which are very clumsy in appearance, being shaped like a spoon cut longitudinally in half. These boats or canoes are designed to ride with bird-like buoyancy on any sea, and for the islanders who have been born and bred to manage them they are quite as safe as the larger sailing-boat. They have, moreover, several other advantages compared with the hookers ; they have greater mobility, they can sail in shallower water and can therefore outdistance the larger craft when it is a matter of landing fish, their upkeep is of course less expensive and also they can be stored in safety, keel upwards, above high-water mark, while the hooker must ride out a gale at anchor and must risk the danger of breaking loose.

The discovery of paraffin oil has lowered the working value of the hooker, for in former days the harpooning of basking sharks was one of the chief occupations of hooker men, but now the shark oil has been superseded. Cod and ling are caught off the islands in winter, and in summer mackerel, bream and gurnet ; sometimes a great catch of mackerel will have no market and then the fishermen's families salt in the fish for winter consumption. Salt fish drying on the rafters and a cow-hide for the making of pampooties stretched upon a wall are a part of the home furniture of nearly every cabin. A stranger unacquainted with these interiors would not perhaps have understood the remark made recently by a school-teacher who was describing the look of a very hungry child, a little girl who was the youngest of four in a poor family. The teacher said : ' Nanneen would hook the fish off the rafters with her eyes.'

Tales of the sea are seldom in any part of the world milk-and-water tales for babes, and certainly the Aran stories are no exception, dealing, as they are bound to deal, with men risking lives in a daily occupation, with men separated from the jaws of death by one frail strip of canvas, with men snatched from the jaws of death by the steady eye and steady hand of a comrade, with portents and with wailing voices, with the fairy folk and with ugly monsters issued from the deep only to terrify men for a moment and return to their sea abysses. One or two of these sea tales of the islands have a gruesome twist; here is one, which must be taken at its face value, concerning the survivals of the *Lusitania*, only they were not actually survivals because they were corpses.

One came ashore on the northern rocks, not very far from Gortnagapple. It was held up by its throat and head in a life-belt, but when they came to search the pockets they noticed that it had no face. However, they took what they could find and they gave it back to the sea. Two more were drifted in and these were less imperfect relics, but each of them was searched in the spirit of men saying 'Allah is good, praise be to Allah,' and then they were sent to join the faceless one. There came a fourth borne in on the tide with features all complete but pockets empty, and in disgust at the failing harvest the Gortnagapple people left him high and dry, not troubling to throw him back; he had not earned his burial. Later he was identified by his relatives as an American millionaire. Several island families are still enriched by pensions from those relatives, paid to them in recognition of their hospitality to the corpse.

It would be impossible for any artist or writer to set the Aran islands down on paper. Synge must have been aware

of this and he had no arrogance for attempting the impossible, therefore he did not try to paint a life-size canvas in his words ; he only lived the life of the islanders and was content to catch here a sidelong glance and there a whispered story, and here a look upon the face of rocks and there a murmur of the sea, and then, forgetful of himself and without colouring his impressions, to set them down with quiet sincerity. For these very reasons his book, though formless and fragmentary, will outlive change and progress and will remain a memorial to the real Aran, like a little pool reflecting a great light.

For Aran is a personality. Some changing or unchanging features of her may be caught and imprisoned by pen or brush, but the essential Aran, the soul of her, can never be portrayed. It is ageless, wild, primeval, as the roar of the Atlantic breakers, as a sudden look in the eyes of Aran men and women, as a sudden lift in their Gaelic chants of lamentation. But if a stranger, in setting out for Aran, will shed his superfluity of notions gained from inheritance and education and experience, and will arrive there with an open mind, he will soon perceive that there is a strange quality about life on these islands.

It is not only that the want of colour in the land and the want of luxury about the hearths will breed a kind of spiritual ecstasy, for Aran shares with other limestone countries that harsh grey aspect which beauty may take for medium as it sometimes will take unrelenting human features. But it also shares with Ireland, and with Ireland alone, that peculiar softness in the air which is like a blessing, and on Aran this softness, having less diversity of colour to play upon, seems to have had its own quality intensified, so that, for any who have eyes to see, the islands will bring day after day a lovely phantasmagoria of grey and silver

lights, of pale green and pale blue tints on rock and cloud and wave and distant mountain.

The same austerity that nature shows to the outward eye in Aran is a characteristic of the daily life of the islanders. They have no great variety of occupation and very little choice of amusements, consequently those few things that fill their thoughts and time are intensified in character. Men of Aran have no experience of the kaleidoscopic, superficial changefulness that mainlanders dignify by the name of 'living,' but into everything they do they will put full energy and out of everything they experience will extract full value.

For instance ; since the island fauna includes no large animals, Aran people can know nothing of the joys of hunting except when engaged in the pursuit of rabbits, but tales of this same sport of rabbit hunting are invested in such conditions with really epic status. It does not sound on the face of it as if it were a sport worthy to engage or develop man's highest powers, but whoever estimates this rabbit hunting at its face value has never seen those island sportsmen in full cry.

The ferret has done its work, bolting a rabbit from some crevice in a rock, or from some ancient Druid grave or cloghaun ; the speedy dogs, held back at first at a distance of five yards to give the rabbit a fair chance, have now been loosened and the quarry is well away. The hunters in their raw-hide pampooties are swift-footed as Achilles, and when a loosely built stone hedge looms six feet high before them they take a flying leap on to a projecting stone a foot or two below the top and then another leap on to the rock slabs on the other side, with the fleetness of a race-horse. On other occasions, if the dogs are not at hand when the rabbit bolts from a rock, quickness of eye and hand are

needed to kill it with a stick. Every muscle, every faculty is kept on the stretch in an Aran rabbit hunt.

Another example of this intensiveness in the island life may be noticed in the women's handiwork. Having no experience of silks and satins and soft raiment and purple and fine linen, they also have no need of them and they knit, or weave and fashion, their own woollen or homespun garments; nature has fitted their wants and their supply. But, for all the simplicity of their needs and their material, they execute their work with the devotion of an artist. The jerseys that the women knit for their fishermen are white or indigo, so that it is not in wide range of colours that they obtain their rich effects but in the variety of patterned stitches, and on these square-shaped jerseys with round necks they improvise, as a musician will improvise on some simple melody, their own individual fantasia. There are circles and ellipses and zigzag lines and dots like a chain of pearls and loops and lovers' knots and lines like rippled water; these garments are like Gothic architecture that combines with great simplicity of form a lavish richness of adornment on capital and column, on architrave and transom. And, like those medieval craftsmen, these women put their own personality into their art, so that no two jerseys are alike. Then there are the woven many-coloured crisses that the fishermen tie round their waists and each one is made of a tiny chequered pattern and every pattern is the result of individual thought. Assuredly the needlework of Aran women is no perfunctory art.

Austerity in nature, austerity in daily life, these are the island characteristics which he who runs may read to-day between any dawn and dusk. But there is also in the very soul of Aran people some correspondent quality; a self-reliance bred, in many generations, of conflict with the

elements ; a remoteness of spirit traceable to some pagan era very long ago but fostered, in many generations, by lingering belief in magic and in unseen powers ; a certain simplicity, the simplicity of men who have not been distracted all their days by the claims on mind and body of our phantasmagoric modern world, but who, in their own timeless island life, have found time to face, even if they could not solve, the elemental problems of being, the problems of birth and hunger, of toil and mating and danger and death.

ESCAPE.

*I walked beneath a jewelled canopy of sky
And raised my tear-dimmed eyes unto the stars,
And there beheld such glorious infinity on high
That those small thoughts which chained my mind
Broke into fragments, and were cast aside
Like worn-out prison bars.
"The glorious liberty of the Children of God"
Were words which flashed new meaning to my soul.
Humbly I glimpsed the boundless freedom and the endless scope
Of Life illimitable, imperishable, whole.*

I. FOULIS.

DARK HORSES.

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

[At Merton Magna, in East Devon, live Richard Challice, wheelwright, Ivy, his wife, Leonard, Samson, and Linda, his children, and Verity, his old mother. Simon Pye, friendly, retired neighbour, engages Richard to look after his orchard and Linda as maidservant: he makes friends with the Challices and gives Richard his dream, a piece of land on which is a disused lime-kiln. Simon's son, Gerald, visits his father and sets his snares for Linda. Gerald murderously drives over Richard as he tries to prevent Linda's elopement.]

XIV.

THE WELCOME HOME.

GRANNY CHALLICE held the communication between her hands when Ivy admitted Mr. Pye, and without speaking she gave it to him.

'Short and sweet or not as may be,' she said. The letter was brief enough.

'MY DEAREST FATHER' [wrote Linda].

'This is only to tell you I am very well and very happy. I ought to have wrote sooner, but life's a whirl for the minute. I'll send you a long, long letter very soon and tell you all you want to know and, please God, we'll meet again soon after.

'Best love to all and Mr. Pye.

'Your loving daughter

'ETHELINDA.'

There was no direction within the letter and it had a London postmark.

Simon's first thought was for Richard.

'One of you boys must take this to your father to-night,'

he told Leonard and Samson. 'It may make all the difference to his rest.'

'Very good news I'd say, sir,' thought Ivy.

'I hope so, Mrs. Challice; I hope so indeed,' he answered, 'but as to that, time will soon show. For the moment the all-important thing for Dick is to know that Linda is well and happy. He can't know too soon.'

'I'll go up along to Father,' said Leonard, 'and take him the letter to see with his own eyes.'

'It may mean rest for him, or it may not,' croaked out Verity. 'His own eyes will seek more than what she tells, and they won't find it. But I'd chance that and let him hear to-night. He'll just dwell on it that she's well and happy. There's that much peace in it.'

Leonard went his way and Simon reported that Dick was far better and clearer of mind than he had expected to find him.

'He's a very noble fellow,' he declared, 'and you'll have to give him the welcome he deserves when he comes home.'

'Trust us, Mr. Pye,' promised Ivy. 'We're thinking on a thousand things for his comfort.'

Verity glowered, but did not speak. An incident of the pending preparations had soured her bitterly and she designed to acquaint Mr. Pye with it at a future time.

They invited his opinion of Linda's letter, but he could only dwell on the comfortable fact that she wrote with happiness. Relying in this matter upon Granny, he turned to her.

'You were a true prophet, ma'am,' he said, 'and I'd like to hear what you think. To my mind I agree with your daughter-in-law. We can feel relieved.'

Verity answered very briefly.

'The bright thing about it is they ain't married,' she said, and Ivy protested.

'You've no right to say that, Mother,' she cried out.

‘Every right,’ answered Verity. ‘In her letter, left when she ran away, she said we should hear tell the minute she was wed. That’s three weeks ago. Now we’ve got to wait for that bit of news—and the longer the better. Don’t let nobody think I want ’em to be married. I want ’em to be parted and I pin my hope to it. The shorter way she goes on his road to hell, the better chance she’ll have to leave it.’

Simon stole away before these sentiments and it was some days before he saw any members of the Challice family again. Next day he directed that the search for his son should be abandoned and found himself agreeing with the view of Granny Challice.

His family visited the sick man weekly and Verity was presently able to go again. Richard declared himself much relieved at the news of Linda ; but he was soon clamouring to hear if any later letter had arrived. Nothing more reached them, however, and he began to take a dark view of her silence. His mother influenced him to some extent and he cared less for her virtue than her safety now. But indirect news did at length reach them, for Simon, much to his surprise, received a letter from his son. No direction accompanied it and Gerald explained the fact by saying that he did not want any trouble with Linda’s family. He wrote how they were now agreed that marriage would not conduce to their happiness, declared that their generation was awake to the misery marriage generally created and condoned their friendship as a commonplace of modern life. Linda, said the young man, was exceedingly happy and perfectly free. He begged his father to set these facts before her family and reconcile them to the situation. Then he trusted that Simon was in the best of health and hoped presently to hear that a visit from Linda and himself might be welcome and would create no foolish and needless unpleasantness.

Mr. Pye took the missive ill, however, and bitterly resented his son's achievement. He belonged to another order, and the worldly wisdom of Gerald made no appeal to him. Philosophically the interest lay in Linda, and when he thought upon her, he felt assured that much must still be hidden. She was built on her father's pattern and it seemed almost impossible to believe that she could be reconciled to her present manner of life.

He showed nobody the letter, but reported it and told the Challices that he had heard from his son and that Linda was well. Richard clamoured for an address, that he might write to Linda, but Simon told him the letter contained none. It had come from London and that was all he knew about it.

Then fell a day when the wheelwright returned to his home and family. He avowed great thankfulness to be back and praised the arrangements that had been made for him. A bedroom was waiting, on the ground floor, where the parlour had been turned into one.

'You'll have no call ever to climb the stairs again,' said Ivy. 'That was my thought for your comfort, Richard, and it will save you a deal of trouble.'

Many other evidences of their planning—some painful—awaited him, but he applauded them all and admired their cleverness.

'I'm nimble as a goat on my crutches already,' he said, 'and my false leg they've fitted on me is more vexation than it's worth. I hate the thing and count to fetch about cleverer without it.'

Mr. Pye visited him on the morning of his return and also evinced thought for Richard. He had bought a machine on wheels worked by the hands of the driver, for he felt that this vehicle would prove a great convenience to his friend. Dick was much moved at the gift and tried it out under Simon's

eyes. The experiment proved successful and he found himself easily able to guide and travel.

‘It’ll bring up the muscles on my arms,’ he said, ‘and once I’ve built my strength, I’ll go nearly as fast as I used to walk.’

It was not long before he pulled himself to Prospect Place and the orchard, and Simon saw him one morning driving his carriage among the little trees. Many weeks had passed since last he saw them, yet presently he declared that all was well.

But, though fits of depression would sometimes crowd down upon Dick and keep him moody as he began to discover the limitations of the changed life, he threw them off and found pleasure in the companionship of his old friends. His family watched over him and were conscious of certain mental changes, for these became evident to those who knew him well. His mind, always simple and sanguine, was simpler yet, and sometimes he spoke and appeared to think as of old to the extent of planning work that was now impossible. Then memory would chasten him and remind him how much was altered.

‘It’s like a death in the house,’ he said to his mother on a day when they sat together upon his land. ‘You keep forgetting it and your mind runs on as of old. Then it comes back and overcrows you.’

She understood.

‘You’ll get used to it, Dick,’ she promised him, ‘and build up and be so busy as ever—only at different jobs.’

Trifles troubled him more than of old, while serious problems occupied him less. A new vein of reflection filled his thoughts and nothing surprised Ivy more than to hear him brood mistily on abstract questions. He did not get far, for he often knew no words in which to formulate these ideas, and none who listened to him, save Mr. Pye, could help him.

Simon, however, sometimes proved clever at guessing what Richard was unable to express. Her father talked often of going to London to find Linda when he was strong enough, but he agonised less about her and declared a conviction that she must be married.

‘Folk don’t change their skins like long-cripples¹,’ he said. ‘I know Linda because she was like me in her mind, and she can’t turn into a light woman just because that filthy man wanted her to.’

Simon observed that he regarded the possibility of Linda’s lapse as still remote and took it far more seriously than the rest of her family. Ivy, behind her husband’s back, now heartily hoped that her daughter would never return ; while Granny Challice continued to feel sure that she would.

‘To have Linda beside my son, to watch over him is what I’m wishful for,’ she told Mr. Pye on an occasion when he saw her alone. ‘I’m too old to be a companion for the man, but there’s a lot of time heavy on his hands and Linda would soon get back into his affection if she came back and made him her first thought. Dick’s got into slow-land before his time along of being mangled so bad. He’s old for his age now, but he don’t know it, thank God, and she’d be the apple of his eye again if she came back to him and helped his life along.’

‘The old spirit is still there,’ said Simon. ‘I never thought that a man could have come out of that furnace of torture so unchanged. But he looks at things a bit different, Verity. Never with bitterness, but deeper. There’s a zest for life growing in him again as he gets used to the new dispensation and forgets a little what the old was like.’

‘He uses his hands a lot,’ she said. ‘He’s clever, same as his father. He nets of a wet day and he’s planting his land very clever as he can with small fruits now. He’s full of what he’s

¹ *Long-cripple* : a snake.

going to grow for your table next year. "Us never died of winter yet," he'll say.'

She smiled at the recollection—a very rare thing for her to do. Then she scowled.

'Of all frosty bitches on this earth my daughter-in-law's the hardest,' she said. 'I'll go finger cold on the hottest day when I think upon her. She's turned Dick down now—don't sleep with him no more. He says it's natural for her to be repulsed by his broken body ; but I say it's the beastliest thing ever I knowed her to do. And that's something. If I knew of a wise woman, I'd go to her and give her my agate brooch and golden earrings and everything worth money I've got left, to put the evil eye on Ivy. But there ain't no wise women left now.'

'The evil eye,' murmured Simon. 'It meant something, no doubt, once upon a time, my dear. But trust Dick to fetch her round.'

'He don't want her no more,' she said. 'He's very understanding. There's no nature in her nor never was—no more than a stained-glass window.'

John Caryl often came on days when Richard did not visit the workshop. He held business to be fairly good and was full of work.

'In sober honesty,' he said once, 'I can praise Samson. He's standing to work very well. He ain't built right for heavy labour, because he's got small bones, Samson have, and if your bones are small, they can't carry enough flesh on 'em for a wheelwright's job. But I'd say that the spirit is willing. Your downfall has made your son work harder than ever I thought he would do.'

Richard was pleased and praised Samson next time he saw him.

'You'll come into the business and be rightful owner, Sam,

when I'm gone,' he said. 'That's your portion as my eldest son.'

He never mentioned Linda to anybody now, but his mother knew that he had grasped the situation and could always tell by his face when his thoughts were upon her. Verity kept much with him, for she understood that he liked her to be at his right hand, and Ivy failed in no attention and was always begging him to put on his false leg and get used to it. But he had turned against the substitute. His right leg had been shorn below the thigh and the artificial limb made him uncomfortable. He used Mr. Pye's little chariot a good deal and could push it along at a good pace, but it wearied him after a mile or two, for his old physical strength never returned. Best he liked his crutches, and now that his armpits were calloused to the strain, he could use them with increasing skill.

'They'll become a part of me very soon,' he said to his wife, 'and I'll wonder however I fared without 'em.'

As autumn fell he sat a good deal beside his fire; but though Simon tried to interest him in books, he never succeeded. Dick enjoyed to listen while Mr. Pye or his mother talked, but he hated reading.

For some time he refused repeated invitations to come to the 'Cat and Fiddle' and Mr. Beedell visited him occasionally with such local news as he could collect; but at last Richard decided to go down to the inn again and found himself welcomed very heartily. The date of his coming was told and David Beedell begged his customers to keep off the past and say nothing but what might make Challice cheerful. He arrived on his crutches with Samson and Leonard and found a famous old chair awaiting him beside the bar-room fire.

‘The gaffer’s chair—eh, David?’ he said. ‘So be it, and thank you.’

He shook a good many hands and asked after the families of several men. They strove to take a hopeful view, and old Sloggett, though he meant friendship, said something that did not please the hearer.

‘You’re going to be all right,’ he told Dick. ‘You’re putting on weight, I see, to make up for your leg, Challice.’

It was true, but gave Richard no pleasure.

‘Don’t you rub that in, Matt,’ he begged. ‘I know it only too well. ’Twas all I could do to keep a waist-line by ceaseless work when I was well. Now I’m getting too fat, for all I go light on the tucker.’

‘Think nothing of it,’ said the postman. ‘There’s lots of ways to keep the fat from rising on you. You work your “run-about,” Dick: that’ll keep you thin.’

‘Wouldn’t say a word for fear it got back to Mr. Pye,’ explained Richard, ‘but I don’t care a deuce of a lot about the “run-about.” ’Tis strange to be sitting down out of doors.’

‘Mr. Pye’s not so well as he might be himself,’ said Beedell. ‘He says the rheumatism’s gaining ground upon him. He’s like you—fond of going on his feet. But he’ll only take a dry ginger now. Dr. Thorpe’s ordered him off beer. Very sorry for himself too, because beer was his stand-by.’

Richard did not remain very long, but talked enough to indicate that his outlook in certain directions was changed. They perceived that he had been through a tremendous physical experience and that it had turned his mind from the old channels. Mr. Sloggett discussed him when he and his sons were gone.

‘Looks to be turning pious,’ said Matthew. ‘Them that

see death and give it a miss will go that way sometimes—or else just the opposite.’

‘What’ll he do?’ asked Arthur Tidy. ‘He can’t stand to the forge no more. All his work and all the things he did to turn a penny called for strength, and his strength is took from him. You can know that because his voice has gone smaller.’

‘He’d have been up against it in any case come a few years,’ said Sloggett. ‘His work’s leaving him. ’Tis mostly motor engines on the land now—more and more of ’em.’

‘Dick’s had all he wants to have of motor engines, I reckon,’ said Saul Date. ‘’Twas a motor smashed him, and if I was him I’d never rest till I got the dog that did it into gaol, where he belongs.’

‘There’s a lot hid,’ answered Beedell. ‘They won’t talk about it. I sounded Mr. Pye, but he wasn’t telling anything.’

‘Would you say Dick had anything put away?’ asked the postman, but David thought not.

‘He’s had tolerable heavy calls on him all his life, Arthur, and the thousand and one jobs he’d take on to eke out his money will be beyond his powers now.’

‘If he’d had any money, he’d have dropped it when he wanted to burn lime,’ said Matthew. ‘His family did ought to help him and his sons stand to work.’

‘Samson’s working so well as he can,’ answered John Caryl who had just come in, ‘but he’s weedy and soon tires. His bones is too small.’

‘I doubt old Pye would let Richard get down on his uppers,’ said Tidy. ‘In a manner of speaking his son, that sloked away Linda and ran down Dick, is the one that’s ruined the family, and Simon Pye knows that very well.’

‘He’s done what a man could and stood by ’em,’ pointed out David Beedell. ‘It’s troubled him a lot. From a thing or two he said, it wouldn’t surprise me very much if Mr. Pye

was to leave Merton before so very long. If he's going lame, and he reckons he is in for that, then there's an end of his country walks and so on. He said that Dr. Thorpe had warned him the river mists in winter was against him; and if he feels that Dick will always be a painful object in future to call his blackguard son to his memory, then he might find that another reason for going somewhere else.'

'Would you say we might send round the hat for Dick?' asked Tidy. 'It's done now and again when a neighbour has a bit of bad luck.'

'No,' replied Beedell. 'Not a case for it, Arthur.'

'He'd be stung in his pride if you was to do that,' declared Caryl. 'Mr. Challice has got his pride like another, and if he thought you reckoned he was so poor as to want charity, there'd be a rumpus.'

'You can send round the hat for me as soon as you've got a mind to,' said Saul Date. 'A deserving creature if ever there was one, and my pride won't stand in the way.'

They laughed at him.

'I've called you a good many names you wasn't christened by, Saul,' admitted Beedell, 'but I never called you proud.'

'I'll tell my brother to run you in for public begging,' said Tidy. 'Cadgers like you did ought to be locked up.'

They returned to the Challice family and old Sloggett spoke to Caryl.

'Does Dick ever tell about his girl?' he asked. 'You're his man and you was addicted to her, so he might tell what he knows to you, Johnny.'

'Never. Her name don't pass his lips no more. She's gone like a pinch of smoke,' answered John.

'She was off you after he came along?' asked Tidy.

'She was off me after he came along as you say,' granted Caryl. 'What you call cause and effect. I might have

offered for her, but that rogue blinded the woman. I've never wished no human being evil in my life till now, but if ever by God's goodness I had the chance to smash his face in, I'd take it.'

'Never heard you tell such a long speech before,' approved the postman. 'And I hope the chance may over-get you, Johnny.'

'Tripe !' scoffed Date. 'I'll lay Linda's having the time of her life along with him.'

'And where do it lead, you lousy fool ?' asked Caryl, scowling on Saul Date. 'Where do it lead if a woman's living in sin ?'

'Order, all !' commanded David. 'I won't have no aspersions, and well you know it. We can't say anybody's living in sin. They may be lawfully married. Shamed of you, Caryl. I ain't shamed of you, Saul, because good shame's wasted on you. But I say this : we know nothing and so we didn't ought to judge anybody. The woman was good if the man was a rotter.'

'You're a dull dog for a publican,' said Date. 'Always down on fair arguments. Cant, I call it—a most hypocritical man. The world don't stand still for you and, be it as it will, you had plenty of Red Waistcoat's money.'

Beedell looked up at his clock.

'I'll put you right as to that another time, Saul, if you've got the wits to be put right,' he answered. 'It's closing now. Clear out, the pack of you. There's nights when I never want to see any of you again, and this is one of 'em.'

With laughter they departed.

XV.

AUTUMN.

On an October afternoon, when leaves were flying, the air heavy over Exe and migrant birds going south by night, Mr. Pye came to see the Challices. Richard was out and Verity had been talking with her daughter-in-law. Ivy was regretting the signs of age in Dick.

'He don't look forward like he used to do—broods too much about Linda,' she said.

'Tis you make him brood about her. 'Tis you throw up the sponge,' declared Granny. 'Your husband have had other disappointments and harder knocks than anybody knows but me. He's too kindly and decent and noble in his mind to get on in the world like it is now. All greed and grasping and Devil take the hindmost : that's the world now. If it was a Christian world, then Richard would have been a proper success—yes, he would ; but not in this baggering world.'

Simon, who had heard the remark, approved.

'A very true thought,' he answered. 'The world's a difficult place for Christians, without a doubt. But it always was.'

'And he ain't old for his age either,' continued Richard's mother. 'This cruel fate have made him call up his reserve powers, but he's far ways short of being conquered by it. He's got more pluck and sense than ever you had, or will have, Ivy.'

Ivy was cowed and troubled at this season, for she had grasped the truth about Linda now and bitterly resented it. She did not answer the old woman, but rose and left the house place where they sat.

'She's cast down and got her tail between her legs as to her daughter,' explained Verity. 'She says the girl's on the streets by now, and everybody knows it, and she's got no more heart to face the eyes of the people. She'd give her soul to get out of Merton.'

'You didn't ought to say that, Granny,' croaked Leonard Challice. He was at home with a heavy cold upon his chest.

'It's natural for mother to be troubled,' he continued. 'You don't understand what it is to a proud woman like her.'

Verity turned to the visitor.

'You haven't heard any more from your son, Mr. Pye?'

'Yes I have, but still no address. He's very cheerful and says that he has had some good luck. Of Linda he merely reports that she is going strong. "Going strong" is the expression he used. I've told Richard about it and I'm rather disposed to start to hunt them down again.'

'You generally see how you might better most things you do, when you look back on 'em after,' said Verity. 'And that business was one of them. I take a lot of blame to myself, because I was the oldest of the family and ought to have seen deeper into it. But Dick was wrong. He done what I advised and wouldn't stand for the match when they asked to marry. But he struck too soon and gave your blasted boy his chance to strike back.'

'What should have been done? And how could you have advised differently, feeling as you always felt about it?' asked Simon.

'We ought to have agreed to their wishes,' she answered. 'Any fool can see that now; but by the time a fool can see a thing, it's mostly too late to do it. If we'd agreed, then look how different it would have fallen out.'

'Because you'd say Gerald never really meant to marry?'

'Of course he didn't—never. And when he saw it was to

be marriage or nothing, he'd have found excuses and soon faded out. By opposing 'em we played into their hands. The bad sign now is that Linda don't write. I counted she'd write.'

'But you've got to remember that she knows nothing about her father's illness,' said Mr. Pye. 'And there's another thing. She may feel that she would never be welcome in her home again under the circumstances.'

'She ain't giving us a chance,' said Leonard. 'She'd know, whatever she'd done, that Father wouldn't turn her out. Girls don't think like they used to think.'

'Miss Mingo's laying in her fireworks again, she tells me,' said Mr. Pye. 'Are we going to have a big bonfire next month, Leonard?'

'Couldn't tell you, but I expect so, sir. We keep up the fifth of November pretty lively round these parts,' answered the young man.

'Little you know,' began Granny, who rose to the lure. 'Guy Fawkes Day was a day once; now 'tis nought. Fine manners and customs went to it when I was young. Now you'll hear no more than a squib or two go bang; but there was a proper upstore in the past. Men would carry flaming tar-barrels on their heads and not fling 'em down till they smelt their hair burning; and the childer made scores of turnip lanterns and cut eyes and noses and mouths in 'em and put a taper inside and run about bawling through the streets. I've done it myself scores of times. And the bonfires was bonfires then and used for more than a blaze. The mummers were always out in fantastic garments, and more, much more, because we had a lot of clever chaps in them days good for effigies.'

'Effigies, now?' asked Simon, getting out his pocket-book. 'Effigies of Guy Fawkes?'

‘No,’ answered Verity. ‘Not him. Nobody cared a darn for him. The effigies belonged to folk nearer home. If a man or woman happened to be hated and, of course, there’s always hateful people handy for the seeking, then they’d build up effigies of ’em and dress ’em like the objects of public scorn and then go to their doors and burn the mommets under their noses. That stung ’em, I warn ’e ! I’ve known folk put their traps in a cart the very next morning after a dose of public opinion like that and clear out of a village and never be seen again. And others I’ve known to brazen it out and not give a damn. I liked that sort best myself. There was a loose woman—one of the big-hearted sort I used to know very well fifty years ago. And they made an example of her and a very fine effigy and drew up on the appointed night afore her cottage. And she caught the spirit of the fun and said, “Hold on, boys, I’ll give you one of my bonnets to crown her !” And she flung a hat out of her window to ’em. A cat-handed, clumsy woman she was and weighed twelve stone and only thirty years old ; but a heart of gold.’

Both Mr. Pye and Leonard found matter for interest in this story and the future was to see a sequel ; but Granny Challice, once set going, roamed on until Ivy returned to get the tea. She found her mother-in-law cheerful and excited, for only the past had power to excite her very often. Then Verity quieted down and asked after Mr. Pye’s rheumatism. He confessed that it gained on him.

‘There was a time,’ he said, ‘when I feared to use a stick as the sign of growing age and walked without one. But not now.’

‘Pain drives out fear,’ declared the old woman. ‘If I don’t know, who should ? You ain’t frightened of having a tooth drawn after it’s given you hell for a week.’

‘True enough. Fright belongs to the young and inexperi-

enced,' said Simon, and then the ancient laughed at a recent recollection.

'Dick was minded to go to church last Sunday night. And I went along with him, Mr. Pye, and parson tried his best to frighten us with the end of the world. "End of the world, my dear man," I very near shouted at him. "That'll be child's play to what I've been through in my time!"'

'Only the upper people can picture a worse hell than what they've had here,' said Ivy, 'not the poor.'

'Me and her agree sometimes, you see,' commented Granny Challice.

Simon declined tea and left them to walk awhile before night fell. He hoped that Leonard would be quickly restored to health and assured Ivy that in his opinion definite news might soon be expected. Then he went off and the river drew him, for he would brave the rising mists of evening for the peace and quiet and the magic of the twilight hour. A feast of colour still lingered on the heron-haunted flats, and Simon, guessing that he might not very long remain in this rustic home, felt a human thread of regret winding through his thoughts. He was pensive this evening and not in tune with the river, for there are times of weakness when the old may grudge deathless things their immortality and hunger for privileges that Nature denies. Not often did Simon spare a thought to his latter end; but there came to him now one still less disposed to do so—one who found the wind of his afflictions already tempered to the shorn lamb. He met Richard upon his crutches and found him in a sanguine mood.

They talked together and the cripple explained.

'You'll wonder to see me all alone doing nought, but I was wishful for peace this afternoon. They tell me that I'm the big noise at home, Master, but no man's a very big noise when two women's tongues are going.'

'Females never realise that a man likes to be alone sometimes,' explained Simon. 'They hate to be alone themselves apparently and don't appreciate the blessing of silence as we sometimes do. But the average man likes his own company and the peace of the grave round him now and then, when he can get it.'

'I love quiet more than I did,' confessed Richard. 'If an argument runs high, 'tis better not to take a hand, but clear out. My wife has got tricks of speech that don't ring true, and then I'm so foolish as to be vexed with her. She's a woman very callous to other people's troubles, and she'll give a religious reason for putting Number One first and last and always. That ain't fair fighting in my opinion.'

'Disguised behind religious motives, our selfishness is less open to attack, no doubt,' said Simon.

'My mother never pretends nothing and you know where you are with her.'

'No—there's no humbug of any sort about Granny,' declared Simon.

'She's got all manner of cranky notions, yet never lacks for common sense,' continued Dick. 'And as so few people on earth have got any to name, it stands to reason she must feel out of patience with a lot she hears and sees.'

'It's a test of your common sense that you should feel out of patience now and then,' said Mr. Pye. 'I like to see the young men interested enough in events to be angry with them. If enough rose up in their anger, things might get altered; but our rulers won't listen to mere subterranean thunderstorms. You must break out in far-reaching explosions before they take notice. A good cause wants mighty strong backing before Parliament will support it. Yet what do we see? All the rules of life and civilisation in the balance—everything turned upside down. Common

sense says "Learn how to live in friendship and harmony with your neighbours : seek peace and pursue it." And what they call realistic thinking says, "Learn how to destroy and exterminate your neighbours and put your wits and money and labour into piling up the machines to do it best and quickest." "

They proceeded on these gloomy lines until Mr. Pye began to cough and the fog to trouble his breathing parts.

'Come home with me and get out of this mist and have a spot of whiskey, Dick,' he said. 'We're casting each other down, and there's no common sense about that. I ought not to stop here. Thorpe bids me go. I've had a touch of asthma since I saw you—a nasty complaint and makes you remember your age.'

'Nature haven't got any more use for us when we are back numbers, Master.'

'None whatever ; but we may still have some use for ourselves. Come and drink. A poor substitute for beer in my opinion ; but I've taken my last bottle of ale, Dick. Doctor says I might as well drink poison.'

'Giving it up has cast you down, I expect,' said Richard when presently he sat beside Simon's fire.

'No,' answered the elder. 'I've been fairly reasonable and not played the martyr, Richard. If you can carry on like a man, remembering what it was to have two legs, then surely I can carry on like a man, remembering what it was to drink beer.'

'To carry on is the thing,' admitted Richard. 'You ask yourself funny questions now and again if you hap to lose a limb. 'Twas a game in the War, to ask each other what we'd least wish to part with. I'd put tobacco before most things.'

'Tobacco before your leg, Richard ?'

‘Not now. Now I know what a leg means. But there’s very few members I wouldn’t have sacrificed before my pipe. Never scratched in the War, where a leg might have gone to the glory of England ; but left to keep it till your son made war upon me and struck to kill. Thank God, for your sake, he ain’t a murderer on top of his other crimes, Master.’

‘I hold him to be a murderer,’ answered Simon, ‘and it is quite possible that he thinks he is one. I’m entirely with your mother in my hopes that Linda will presently escape from him and come home. She may want to do so and he has taken means to prevent her. But I have something like a conviction that you will hear definite news before long. Such a union burns itself out and appears to leave no very considerable scars behind where the young are concerned.’

‘’Tis their elders get the scars.’

‘Yes, and often it’s their elders that deserve them. But not you or me. We at any rate reverse the maxim, Dick, for we can say that the sour grapes our children ate have set our teeth on edge.’

XVI.

THE GUY.

Leonard Challice devoted considerable thought to his grandmother’s recollections and, while kept indoors away from work, found a great idea dominate his mind. He often perceived the possibilities in Verity’s vanished memories from a far past, and her vision of ancient, November celebrations awoke in the youth a wonder whether one rite at least might be happily revived. If of old the effigies of evil-doers were publicly burned on Guy Fawkes night, to the joy of the community, and for rough justice on the sinner, why not

again? None now hated Gerald Pye more heartily than Linda's brother and he began to picture the creation of something that should be recognised for what it was and then destroyed by fire with ignominy before the people. As a rule, while Leonard abounded in ideas, energy and will power lacked when the business of turning thought into action confronted him; but for once a lively animus kept him keen, and the more he reflected on his inspiration, the better he liked it. Fear indeed awakened that he might not prove clever enough to do the work, but he determined to try and confided first in his brother. Samson heartily approved and they sought the aid of other friends. All agreed that something to be recognised as Gerald would not prove beyond Leonard's power to create, and in the privacy of a cowshed young Challice began to make experiments with a ball of clay. There were many distinctive and familiar details to simplify his task. The victim's big black eyebrows were not forgotten, or his red lips; while for garments all remembered his cap, his baggy knickerbockers, shapely legs in stockings of staring pattern and scarlet waistcoat with the brass buttons.

The artist in Leonard grew by what it fed on. A shadowy instinct inherited of his grandmother awoke in him, for right gipsies never lack the creative strain and must be making something or acting a part. The young man delighted himself and rejoiced in his unguessed gifts. They also much astonished his friends, who came to criticise and help him with suggestions. So the object grew day by day and girls helped young Challice with the garments. The monster was rather more than life-size, and Leonard exhausted his ingenuity in making it look as much alive as possible. When finished, some few days before its destined destruction, it squatted concealed on an old chair in the gloom of the old

cowshed. Wan light from cracks in the roof flashed in its glassy eyes and buttons of brass, its absurd knickerbockers, in-turned feet and blood-red waistcoat. The girls who had made its clothes were permitted to see it and screamed with frightened joy when they did so. The effigy of Gerald Pye enjoyed many receptions, and certain elder people were permitted to see it on faithful promise of secrecy. All familiar with the subject recognised the truth of the portraiture and the artist received congratulations which went to his head and made him dream even grander dreams than usual. He longed for everybody to behold his work and applaud the cunning of his hands. He also hated to think such a masterpiece must be so speedily destroyed. Indeed, long before the fifth of November came, Leonard was already mourning in secret that his achievement would now perish and be forgotten.

He much desired his grandmother to see it, but the matter was kept from everybody at Church Cottage save the brothers, because they guessed that their parents might not approve. Doubts had arisen as to where the dummy should be burned, but though none entertained any particular objection to Mr. Pye, it was felt that only before Prospect Place could the fires be lighted.

‘There’s lots wouldn’t know the meaning of it if we burn it on the green,’ said Samson Challice, ‘but if we draw up at Simon Pye’s, then everybody will know what we’re aiming at.’

It was agreed first to bear the dummy round Merton Magna in the light of torches; and then with its pockets full of crackers, it would be placed upon a burning tar-barrel in the road immediately before Simon Pye’s wicket-gate.

Leonard had sounded his grandmother for possible details on such occasions and heard from her that marrow-bones and

cleavers were often employed to create a din and drown any dissentient voices which might be lifted ; but he guessed there would be noise enough and did not fear obstruction of any sort.

‘ I only wish to God the dirty swine was down here himself to see it,’ said young Challice. ‘ Such an insult would sting a vain devil like him to his dying day.’

‘ More like to sting his father,’ thought Samson. ‘ I doubt he’d care very much what anybody thought of him.’

Others of the village were also preparing to celebrate the night. A big bonfire had been built upon the green as usual, and Susan Mingo never remembered to have sold more fireworks in a long experience. But the march of the effigy was a thing apart. Those concerned proposed to wait until the big bonfire was lighted and then bring out their ‘ guy,’ carry him round the blazing pile for all to see and presently convey him with the host that would surely follow to Prospect Place.

The night came very dark but dry, and fitful fireworks popped and crackled round about from the hour of dusk. Those out for entertainment gravitated to the pile of the bonfire and at eight o’clock it was lighted. Then, as the gathering blaze illuminated the folk, there came the procession in dishonour of Gerald Pye, and that there might be no shadow of doubt, his name was painted in big black letters on a board above the figure’s head. But many recognised it and greeted it with groans and hisses. Thrice it was carried round the bonfire, then set down for people to admire and applaud. The leaping flames lit up the faces of the crowd and the features of the great doll seated among them until, in the lurid distortion of the firelight and black shadow, it looked as human as the rest. Leonard and his brother were among the bearers and the artist rejoiced to hear many praises heaped upon his creation.

‘I made it ! I made it !’ he kept shouting.

‘’Tis the living daps of the man,’ declared old Sloggett, who gloated at the sight. ‘You bear it down to his father, souls, and give him hell—foreigner that he is.’

‘Nobody’s got any quarrel with old Pye,’ said John Caryl, who was at Matthew’s elbow.

‘Yes they have—I have,’ answered the old man. ‘Come on, boys. He’ll go so white as a dog’s tooth when he sees what the nation thinks of his beastly spawn.’

A crowd of more than a hundred men and women trailed noisily down to Prospect Place as the bonfire died, and boys and girls came yelling with them. Nicholas Tidy, who was on duty, felt in doubt as to his course of action ; but he had often known occasions when to do nothing proved the wisest course, and lay friends easily persuaded him that this was one of them.

‘If all’s done orderly I’ll let it pass, but not otherwise,’ he said, and accompanied the throng.

A man and woman became conscious of the procession’s approach presently. Simon Pye, when just about to retire for the night, heard a gathering din and quickly perceived the glare of torches and the advance of a crowd. Unguessing of their purpose he delayed at his window and threw it open, the better to learn what was going forward. Then came the folk and, instead of passing by, assembled before his gate and set about their business. From the midst emerged an object seated upon a chair, and the throng parted, so that Simon’s view should be as direct as possible. In the glare he could read his son’s name clearly enough, but without that he knew instantly for whom the dummy was intended. And at the same moment he recollected Granny Challice and her account of such scenes as he now beheld. The torch-light reached Simon where he stood and the people saw him. He re-

garded them calmly and held his ground. Then came the tar-barrel and he saw the effigy of his son dumped upon it and the fire lighted.

A fine medley of emotions battled in the mind of Mr. Pye, but he had not trained his intellect on rational principles for nothing and reason triumphed. Which is to say that, while he suffered, he maintained a steadfast attitude and considered the scene from the standpoint of the actors in it. He felt no anger against any of them ; he did not quarrel with the herd impulse that had inspired their sally ; he recognised that this rough assertion and vicarious punishment of Gerald was right and just and well deserved. By an effort of will Simon achieved absolute detachment, and since to be detached was to feel no disapproval of what he saw, he approved it. There was even a place for the antiquary in him to be pleased. A subtle sense before his static attitude at the window reassured the crowd. Implicitly they knew he felt no anger, even before the direct evidence of his indifference that quickly followed. With their public denunciation they proceeded cheerfully therefore, and Simon watched the monster in the red waistcoat and garish tweeds burst into flames. Explosions followed and he noted that the people quite forgot him in their excitement ; he heard them roar with laughter as the great dummy shed its limbs and crumbled.

For another minute Simon stood quite still and in that brief space his thoughts flashed as swiftly as the brain builds in a dream. From the hour of Gerald's birth he traversed the years until this present moment and wondered that a newborn infant, within the span of three decades, should thus have stamped his personality on these village minds by an act of evil and so won their payment of contempt and scorn. It seemed a remarkable achievement for such a young man. But Simon was not perturbed, for he knew that these nightly

incidents would be forgotten quickly enough. They interested him far more than they saddened him, and shocked him not at all.

He rang his bell, and Mrs. Butters, who was beholding the rite with horror from the front door, hastened to him fearing some terrible reaction. Instead only a new source of amazement awaited her.

‘How much beer was left,’ he asked, ‘when Dr. Thorpe commanded me to stop drinking it?’

Collecting her senses Mrs. Butters replied :

‘There’s two dozen bottles, Master, and you said I was to ask Joe Bates to bear ’em over to Mr. Challice ; but they ain’t gone yet.’

‘Good,’ said Simon. ‘I’ll ask you to carry them out on a tray to the company with my compliments, woman. Do so at once, or better still, carry them to the gate and let them help themselves.’

Mrs. Butters, suspecting a brain-storm, yet raised no objection. Indeed, the actual task rather commended itself to her. She hastened to obey, lumbered backwards and forwards to the gate with the beer and was rewarded with acclaim. Then Simon, after he had heard them cheer, went to bed, and by the time that he turned out his light, the ruins of the effigy were kicked smouldering into the hedge, the people all drifted away and silence and darkness restored. Only the smeech of burning tar still hung on the still air and shouts came thinly from the village.

As for the woman, who had also witnessed this spectacle, she was walking into Merton Magna from the west and had almost reached Prospect Place when arrested by the approaching crowd. Not desiring to meet anybody, she stopped, retreated a few steps and then, at a field-gate, left the road and hid behind the hedge until the people should have

passed. Soon she saw that they had stopped and were drawn up ; then, walking along the inside of the hedge, she was able to come close and watch them without being observed. Thus hidden, she followed the entire performance with profound interest, for she understood precisely what was being done and the purport of it. Nor did she fail to recognise the central feature of the rite. Varied emotions arose within her at an event so unexpected, but no deeper sensation than surprise at first appeared to fill her mind. Under the fitful glare of the flames her beautiful face only revealed astonishment until the significance of what she saw intruded, and then quickened anxiety was manifest. She could see Simon Pye's abode, but for a time no evidence that he shared the scene with her appeared. Then emerged Mrs. Butters with beer, as a sign that no great indignation or great grief attended the watching man. He was evidently aware of the scene and not stricken by it, so she took some queer comfort from his response to the apparent assault upon him. The woman, though still much mystified, found relief in her discovery. Her face cleared as she considered it and she even laughed to herself. She was quick-minded and now, though weary and anxious for an approaching ordeal to be ended, could find time while she waited to contrast this combined expression of opinion with the events that had occasioned it. She even wondered who had made the great doll so faithfully and perceived how absurdly unlike the original it was, yet how it stood as a sign and symbol of him that might easily be recognised.

The returned native was dressed in dark clothes and carried a small suit-case. Upon her left hand, revealed by the torch-light, there shone a wedding ring. She considered now whether she might evade the crowd and reach Merton by the fields ; but the place was very familiar to her and she judged

it would be better to wait until everybody was gone and she could proceed by the highway unseen. She remained concealed therefore until the ceremony had ended and the people were back in Merton. Then she emerged and walked swiftly to the village. She avoided the green, whence shouts still arose and rockets soared, but turned down a lane and presently reached the precincts of the grave-yard. Then she went into the front garden of Church Cottage and knocked at the door. Now indeed acute feeling marked her, for she entertained grave doubts of her reception. But that was of less importance than the uncertainty as to what might await her in one literally vital particular. But twenty-four hours earlier in her life there had come some horrible and utterly unexpected intelligence to her ears—news involving a man's life, or his death. Upon that information she was here, and though she had hesitated long as to where the truth might best be sought, yet finally determined to come to the fountain-head and directly learn the best or worst. Others might have acted differently, but it was typical of her to do this.

She heard an unfamiliar sound as Richard Challice in his crutches came to answer the door. The slow stumping made her wonder, and then she saw him again with one leg only. But he was alive, and the glory of that discovery lessened the grief of his affliction.

'It's Linda, Father,' she said very quietly, 'and I'll never leave you again if you will me to stop ; but I'll go this instant moment if you say the word.'

Richard nearly fell backward on his crutches, but he lifted his arms to her and put them round her to support him.

'Come in your home,' he said. 'Come in your home and praise God.'

(To be continued.)

THE GENTLE ART OF BIRDING.

BY JAMES W. LANE.

It seems to me that my earliest memory about birds is the recollection of my grandfather's running to get his gun when he saw an osprey. I thought at the time (I was the footling age of three or four) this was pretty wanton of him. I think the hawk was shot, but it had all my sympathy. My second recollection is about the thousands of swallows that filled the air above our house and lawn in September, and my third, at the age of six, is of the bald eagles near our camp on Upper Saranac Lake, New York. With what shrouds of mystery they would suddenly appear from their eyrie in a mountainous pine and fight the osprey for his catch of fish. With what excitement even the guides spoke of them.

These memories of the long ago I recall now when I would wish to remember what started me off on the, to the uninitiated, most peculiar of pastimes. What is there in a mere bird to lead an apparently staid man to drop everything and stalk the creature, at the price of time, discomfort, and other business, until the bird is brought to book within easy vision? Time was—in the days of Audubon and even only a generation past—when a bird seen was a bird to be shot and the gun did the trick now more satisfactorily performed by camera and binoculars, by planting and feeding: it brought the bird to one, but at the expense of wiping it out for ever. Saint Francis, in the familiar picture in the Upper Church of Assisi, befriended the birds

intimately, which is modern policy now—though it has taken us six hundred years to come around to it.

Whatever it was that led me to birds, as it leads others to butterflies and frogs, the fascination has never ceased. It exists on land and sea, in town and country, day and night—everywhere. The more I travelled the more I realised this. The bird-lover doesn't have to wait for any particular season, place, or even hemisphere. Like the poor, birds are always with us. I, who have modestly loved them for as long as I can remember without ever being very scientific about it, have felt the lure of ornithology in every corner.

There was the wonder with which I used to watch the flocks of jaegers that one can always see fishing off the Azores, those birds that skim the water more continuously than gulls, so that when they are down in the trough of even smallish waves they are invisible to one in a boat. Or the thrill with which I watched gannets, those speedy swans of the sea, following the herring fleets off the British coast. Or the sympathetic fear with which I saw young ducks, probably sheldrakes, near the Orkney Islands almost being cloven in two by the onrush of our Atlantic liner's bow until they just skittered off to safety. Often from train windows the best sights can be seen. Once, as an express to the Riviera slowed up around one of the lakes near Aix-les-Bains on a cold winter morning, I looked out of the window and saw only a few feet offshore hundreds of ducks of several species. Just as I was beginning to feel sure of my identifications of these European varieties and had whittled the field down to pochards and scaups, the train whisked off behind a hill !

In the prime of May, when the woods have that pearly iridescence which is yet neither skimpiness nor efflorescence,

just before the dogwoods burst and the wild cherry's bloom is still young, the bird-lover is a-field, shortly after dawn and perhaps, if he is hardy, for all day long. But he does not go birding merely to be a-Maying. The first fortnight of May is undoubtedly his most strenuous time, for it includes the largest wave of the spring migrations, and that means fifty to a hundred different species of birds may be seen in wood, orchard, field, and bay.

By long experience of each month a natural calendar has formed itself in the bird-lover's head. If you could blot out his memory of the current season and put him in a news-sealed dark room in the city and tell him (you are supposed to be anywhere in the Atlantic States between Philadelphia and Boston) that you had just heard the first ruby-crowned kinglet singing, he could tell you, I am pretty sure, what day of the year it was, within two or three weeks. If you told him that you had just seen the first magnolia warbler in the city park as a spring transient, he could come even closer, probably within ten days. And if you had seen a bay-breasted warbler southbound, he would know what time of the fall it was.

But it is when birds come to your own place that you have the best fun. They're not fastidious, and old, hollowed-out cross-sections of trees with covers on them and holes near the top will attract wrens, bluebirds, crested flycatchers, flickers, and owls. That pest-bird, the starling, will try to appropriate them, too, and if he does, you'll have a handful to dislodge him. Soon, though, I began to long for bigger game. I read of that giant-sized swallow, the purple martin, and of how he could only, and merely, be attracted by specially made houses. I bought one and put it up on a high, high pole. Immediately some sort of bird (in the abyss of my ignorance I thought it was a shrike !) arrived

and took possession, with an occasional English sparrow peeping around the eaves to see whether the martin—oh, it was a martin!—was going to molest it.

This was the small beginning of my colony. When the young hatched out, I realised that if they were to return the next year to fight it out with their parents for the tenancy, what with a few sparrow couples to spice the pot, there was not going to be a very happy tenement. So after a while I bought another house and up it went on another high, high pole. The martins have increased in arithmetical progression each year, but there must be a lot of them that fail of proper obituaries, and at least decent burial, for occasionally the dead are left to bury the dead, being found clogging up the doors of their apartments, which they had probably defended with their last breath against intruders. These big swallows, so gay as they gyrate and tumble in the air, more strongly built and robuster-looking than our other swallows, make more for my happiness and peace of mind than stock market upturns. If I could have the year all one season and that season summer, I should choose it only because I know I should never tire of the martins, now scaling the sky like airplanes, now with pinned-back wings catapulting straight down from great heights to the very entrance of their tenements. Alas that I must say tenements rather than gourds, for though gourds I have put up—as southerners do—still my martins prefer the mouldy, old, insect-gnawed house.

The artificiality of houses is evident but absolutely necessary in the case of the martin, which by this period in the stage of civilisation has practically forgotten how to build in trees! Trees, though, are the real places in which to spy upon birds. I have a mulberry tree and some dogwoods. In the former, its leaves are furiously a-rustle for as long

as its berries are ripe or ripening : either robins are tugging at the fruit or they are having a tug-of-war with the cat-birds to keep them from it. In the dogwoods there is little action by the time the human observer usually comes upon the scene. Instead, great robins sit statuesquely and give you a baleful glare if you try to disturb them from the stew which overstuffing has caused.

When birds do things like this, it is time to shoot them—with a camera. The nesting months of May, June, and July is the time to get your telescopic-lens camera out. I admit I am no photographer myself. The only time I tried to photograph a nesting bird (and without a telescopic, too !) was under ideal conditions. I even took no precautions, but marched right up to the nest, which was on a swinging bough about on a level with my nose, pointed the camera into the face of the sitting bird, and let fly. But the bird did also, and by the time the shutter had clicked she was off her egg and I had nothing for my pains. Yet such failure was worthy, for what I was looking in on was a humming-bird and her one egg, approximately the size of a jordan almond. If this is what happened to such an amateur lout of the lens as myself, you can see the number of opportunities for photography a more scientific camera-man would have.

A tour just around my workroom reveals the charm and the variety of birds from all over the world, for artists of all nations have been stimulated to paint and draw the beautiful and characteristic birds of their countries. Above me, a wedge of geese, with dark dry-pointings on neck, feet, and wings, flap low over some sand-dunes, one of America's later contributions to the art of bird-etching. Four carmine-cheeked European goldfinches in mosaic set in black lean against the wall from my desk at my right

elbow and gleam with the brilliancy of the Florentine sun under which their Italian stone-cutter worked. Going around the room, one becomes conversant with the art of Audubon, the greatest bird-engraver of them all, though he was sometimes a good deal less than accurate, particularly in his distorted waterfowl, like the smew, which, nevertheless, in its snowy-breasted beauty is one of the most stimulating of his plates. My smew hangs next to some early English water-colours—a skylark, a couple of linnets, a kestrel, a harrier, two titmice, and a jay—tiny five-by-six things, but which radiate an honest simplicity both in feeling and colour that Audubon cannot match. Circulating again, one arrives now at Bracquemond's pheasants, the type of impressionistic etching by the great Frenchman—early morning sunbeams penetrating a mist-filled meadow where among the furze are scores of birds—that set the style for the Benson, Clark, and Bishop prints of to-day. The demure mandarin ducks from the Orient, in a wood-block print, make the most graceful note in the room, but the colours are so delicately elusive, so Whistleresque, as to cause the print to look almost faded against the faded green walls. Over the book-case is Audubon in his fiercer, more dramatic mood: two yellow-billed cuckoos among caterpillar-eaten leaves chasing a butterfly. But two apparently living birds, a duck and a woodpecker, both feather-fabricated, look less ready to fly—perhaps because in each case bill, feet, and background have been inked in—than the Audubon cuckoos. Last but not one, there is Audubon's young bald eagle shrieking and clinging to a stump. Like Tennyson's,

*He clasps the crag with crooked hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands . . .*

Finally, a redstart gives a decided orange-ice effect against the dull green wall. He and his mate are inaccurate

(American birds a hundred years ago were scarcely well drawn except by Audubon, and not always by him), but they have a lively charm and you would almost expect them to burst into song.

The problem of bird-song is to me the most fascinating of all, I think, which not even the recurrent mystery of migration beats. Sometimes a bird is seen and heard simultaneously; sometimes it may be years before, after seeing the bird, we see another of the same species and hear it in song. Then there are curious interrelations, as it were—certain notes of one kind of bird being ringers for those of another. On my own place I have heard the characteristic lesser-yellowleg's note of some birds on the river almost coinciding with the note of the Baltimore oriole that was in a tree bordering the water. Nor was there thought of imitation. Each bird was uttering its diagnostic note, which it would have uttered had the other species not been around, and neither of these birds is a mimic, although the yellowlegs is well known as a responder to mimicry of its own whistle by hunters.

There is another case of where two species of birds, separated from each other by thousands of miles, have notes and song-phrases not only of the same timbre but of similar accentuation. Again the Baltimore oriole is involved. One year in June, with the memory of his whistling voice ringing in my ears, I sailed for Italy. Disembarking on the Riviera and living there all through July, when the birds were still in song, I thought, whenever chaffinches sang, that the orioles had followed me across the water. But they are an exclusively New World species, as the chaffinch is of the Old World.

Of course, these are the interesting correspondences for which no apparent rhyme nor reason exists. The chicka-

dee's call note says 'phcec-bee,' just as the wood pewee does. The starling, also, has a pewee call, as well as a whistle so identically like that of the bob-white that, where both birds are abundant, one hardly knows what is what. But the starling is a mimic and the chickadee isn't. And how account, except of the score of some woodsy affection, for scarlet tanagers, red-eyed vireos, and even some wood thrushes (when they first arrive in the spring) singing like robins? The oriole also has a sad note like the bluebird's. In fact, the more one delves into ornithological musicology the more intricate and fascinating it becomes. We finally reach the infinite delight of identifying warblers by their songs. It took me years to know the difference between the yellow-warbler's and the Maryland yellow-throat's. Indeed, the song of another warbler, the chestnut-sided, could be bracketed with theirs, except that, after rendering very similar phrases, he tacks on a little extra politeness to his last 'very pleased'—the three added syllables 'to meet you.'

I procured some of those latest phonographic records of bird-songs recently made through the movie-tone method. Not all of the recordings are satisfactory, but I happen to know that when the house wren on the record started to sing, at once there arose outside the song of a live echoing wren. In a few years the records should be improved and then one can fill one's house with all sorts of carolings.

The last delicate attention that you can pay to birds is to act Milord Bountiful to them in winter. Then, like horses in clover, they will always overstuff, if they can. I have seen song sparrows so engulfed in chickfeed that they cannot move and sit on what remains of the food still outside their stomachs, thus effectively preventing the advance of other eaters.

One winter I climbed into a tree ten feet or more from my house and put suet there. The ladder I climbed was left standing against the tree most of the winter either as an occasional convenience or because I was too lazy to take it down. The downy woodpecker that saw the suet saw the ladder. Something of a rite he decided he would make of his meal, particularly since he was not hurried or did not have to get flustered from competition. He would come flying in from the wide open spaces and alight on the lowest rung of the ladder and then, mind you, would mount the thing, rung by rung, with all the dignity and self-conscious vanity of the old-time Hippodrome girls going the other way, down into their pool—until he had reached the top, when, giving a little start, he hopped on to the suet and began cracking off small morsels and stowing them away.

I would probably be a much more consequential being to-day if such sights as this did not waste hours of my time or drive me to distraction. But, then, as every lover of birds knows, it is better to lack consequence than to miss the pleasures that I have tried to describe.

New York.

THE CENTAUR.

It seemed I walked across dark foreign plains,
 Treading the sharp grass and the sun-hot stones,
 Not with my feet, pain-bruised, but with hooves
 Exultant, crushing down the wild thyme bloom,
 Shrub rosemary, where, in the spice-sweet air
 A million bees the pale thin honey made.
 The budded poppy snapped beneath my strength,
 And the dark hoof was beaded white with juice
 Like round sea pearls. And I remembered how
 My eyes had seen the nymphs in their cool haunt
 By a dark pool, where the sun could not slant
 His hot knife beams. I heard from hills the song
 Of a thousand rushing people, and my back
 Was clasped by the strong legs of Bacchantes,
 Who laughed to feel my muscles taut and slack
 Beneath close skin. Their supple fingers pressed
 The cool grapes, swelled and ripe, and juice ran down
 Warm from their hands, like sweat upon my coat.
 And then it seemed I walked upon grey crags
 Where no horse trod, and yet my unshod hooves
 Held firm, and my dark hands pulled healing herbs
 Whose names I knew not; others that I knew
 Were called by sweet southern dwelling sounds
 In an old tongue; grey sage and close-cropped thyme,
 The hairy balm, and wild blue lavender.
 I bore them where an old man caverned lay
 All the sun hours, his thin limbs white as foam
 On mountain rivers, that had been iron-grey
 And proud as the herd-leading stallion.

*Yet he was wise, and his long fingers knew
Strange healing arts—I slept, it seemed, and woke,
My hands lay not upon the fern-strown cave
But on a book, and there, beneath my eyes
Was the word Centaur, and I knew I dreamed.*

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH.

SOPHY'S LAMENT.

*There's silver in the valley now—
And silver on the hill,
For though the terraced orchards bloom
Snows on the heights lie still.*

*There's silver too in my bright hair,
Though youth still lights mine eye,
For when true love is hollow proved
Some part of youth must die.*

*Too soon the blossoms fade and fall,
Too soon comes winter's reign,
Trees know another spring; but mine
Will never come again.*

G. S. JACKSON.

Vernon, B.C.

AND NO GHOST WALKS.

BY M. A. PEART.

'THERE have been a lot of alterations since you were here last,' said the Vicar. 'We've had the dilapidations done, a new radiator in the study, and the hood of the door scraped.'

'I noticed it. A great improvement. That stone weathers well. They were Goths to paint it.'

'They were. Then this floor was done. Oh, and rather an odd thing : in the closed cellar under this room they found a skeleton.'

'A what ?'

'A skeleton.'

'I never knew there was a cellar under this floor.'

'No, it's been closed. It's not a real cellar ; one stoops as one walks about it. A sort of low chamber to make the floor level with the landing when this drawing-room was built out in 1798. The rest of the house is Queen Anne, or older. The entrance had been walled up. Quite interesting to go down. Remains of an old stone coffin, and so on. It must have been part of the churchyard at one time. You see, they adjoined.'

'That would account for the skeleton.'

The Vicar knocked out his pipe.

'Not at all,' he said. 'The stone coffin and other remains I should place before thirteen hundred, the skeleton about the end of the eighteenth century. Someone had had a brain wave and used the stone coffin again, that's all.'

'I see,' I said, shivering slightly. 'Well, I hope you

gave it a decent burial and put it back in the churchyard. I don't like the idea of a skeleton under my feet, and a haunted week-end.'

'I had it put back, and the broken lid mortared up. There never has been any haunting, and it's not likely to begin. It's quite evident the man had a decent burial, and had been put there for some purpose. The few little things about him, coins and a snuff-box, I put back too. Nothing to suggest robbery or violence that I could see. The snuff-box had "C. de M." on the lid. There was still snuff in it.'

'I think you're perfectly callous,' I said.

'Odd how you young people get rattled over a little thing like that. You wallow in detective fiction,' said the Vicar.

'Haven't you any theory about it, any ideas? Who was the parson then? I suppose he lived here?'

'Man called Thoroughgood. A good chap, too. Always liked him from his notes in the Parish Register.'

'You talk as if you knew him!'

'I do, a great deal better than some of my neighbours. He wrote a monograph on this place, and kept diaries. He was a naval chaplain before he turned up here, and had seen some stiff fighting. Quite an interesting character. There's a good portrait of him at the Court. The family are away, and I look round sometimes to see all's well. I'll take you over and show you him to-morrow.'

'Odd his portrait should be there, isn't it?'

'He was a cousin of the then Mrs. Berringer. She was an *émigrée*, a young widow, and beautiful. There must have been quite a number of them about then. There's a fine portrait of her by Hoppner, really a charming thing; you'll see it to-morrow. Her first husband, the Frenchman,

was a nasty piece of work, so Berringer tells me. The guillotine did a good thing for once when it finished him. She married Berringer, and had two sons. The present Squire's her great-great-grandson.'

The wind swayed the curtains, and the rain rattled on the window-panes.

'I hope this weather won't last the week-end,' I said.

'A bad July. Pretty heavy storms,' said the Vicar. 'I'm sorry for the farmers; the hay's ruined. Oh, I forgot to say there was rather a good candelabra in the cellar. Heavy brass and alloy. A slight dent in the ball. I've had it done up and fitted with electric light. How do you like it?'

'Very nice,' I said, 'but I wish you'd left it down there.'

'It was just lying about with some junk. It seemed a pity. Oh, I forgot! Among the bones——'

'Thanks! I think I'll get back to my shocker,' I said.

'It's a ghoulish sort of night. You might open up about it to-morrow.'

'Just as you like,' said the Vicar.

After the Children's Service he took me across to the Court. The wind was as high, the weather as stormy, as ever. The three portraits occupied one end of the long Elizabethan room. The men's were interesting, the woman's a lovely thing.

Perhaps it was the absence of life in the house, the fact that the everyday sounds flowing through the rooms were suspended, that made the portraits so alive. These people seemed again to possess the house, the presence of the woman to be a reality.

The artist had painted her three-quarter length, in the flowing silk of the period, drawing on her gloves.

The canvas was a symphony in grey and blue. In the background were moving clouds and, low on the horizon, the Court. From under the shade of her Leghorn hat she glanced backwards over her shoulder, her head beautifully set on her long, slender neck, the neck that had been so near the guillotine. An unexpected look in the dark eyes caught my attention—the look of the hunted. It was fear.

‘Have you noticed the eyes?’ I asked.

‘Very fine,’ said the Vicar. ‘A fine bit of painting.’

‘They are afraid.’

‘Ah well, perhaps so. She had been through the Terror.’

‘Yes, but it’s not a memory, it’s expectant fear. When was it painted?’

‘Some years after her marriage. There’s a small one of the two boys by the same artist over there.’

I turned to the men, whose portraits stood on either side of her. Her husband was in uniform, straight, high-handed, and quick-tempered. The Parson was in gown, wig, and bands. It was a strong, well-balanced, typical eighteenth-century face, and yet a surprise. The face of a fighter rather than a scholar: there was a fighting glint in the grey eyes. Transpose them, and the Parson would have worn the King’s uniform the more easily of the two.

‘Well, I hope they will help you to solve the mystery,’ said the Vicar.

‘I will tell you the moment they do,’ I said.

Outside the porch the summer rain fell in sheets.

‘It’s heart-breaking about the hay,’ said the Vicar.

My week-end over, business kept me in Town for a couple of months. No solution of the problem occurred

to me. Yet I suppose the incidents of the visit were always present at the back of my mind, in the limbo where one stores such things to be ultimately sorted.

One wet Saturday afternoon I had been kept at the office too late to make any special plans, and was fighting my way against wind and rain through the now-deserted streets towards the Tube, when I noticed a small News House in a side street, new and evidently recently opened. I had not seen it before. The programme being continuous, and the rain at that moment drenching, it seemed to offer as good a refuge as anything else for the remnants of a Saturday afternoon.

I remember remarking to the commissionaire as I stepped inside that we had not had such a wet Saturday since July. He agreed, and told me the date—the Saturday I had spent with my old friend at Chesney. He also remarked that its being a Saturday afternoon and the streets being empty made the storm seem heavier, and I remembered how the storm had sounded through the empty galleries of Chesney Court. I asked him what was on the programme. He said that besides the news reels there was a film on Transport. It sounded dull, but a gust of rain decided me. I paid for my ticket, and took my seat. After all, it was warm, dry, and comfortable.

I sat through various news reels and gazettes. We embarked upon the film on Transport. The producer had used an effective idea: we went backwards in time. The big locomotive gave way to the long-funnelled Victorian engine; the Daimler of 1936 to the extraordinary carriage-like car of the nineties, and then to the brougham; the motor-bus to the horse-bus, the motor-bicycle to the bicycle and the penny-farthing.

I had expected the earlier films to become spotted and

imperfect, but they became clearer and more defined. The sound recording improved. The thing was cleverly done.

We were now back in the age of coaches ; horses were everywhere. Following the road with the Bath Coach the country became familiar ; following a line of pack-horses over a rough, hilly road, startlingly so. I sat up in my seat and looked intently as the last pack-horse trotted off the screen. I could not mistake the contour of these hills : we were on Chesney Hill, above the Court, in the parish of my friend the Vicar.

As if to remind me of him, a figure in black came plodding up the hill against the wind. He raised his head. The eyes looking out from the shadow of his shovel hat were familiar, but I could not place them. Towards him were galloping three figures on horseback. Two were small boys on ponies. They cheered and waved their hats as they rattled past and cantered down the hill. The third, a woman, reined in her horse. She was tall and graceful, dressed in the flowing habit of the time. Leaning over her mare, she spoke. I saw her face, and her eyes met mine, the dark, hunted eyes of the Hoppner portrait.

Her voice came clear as a bell down the years.

‘Why do you walk, in such weather?’ she said.

‘I have one or two sick to visit, with no stables. I dislike leaving Pilot out in this weather,’ he said.

‘Tell me, is it Ellen? Is she worse?’

‘I have not heard. If she is, I will let you know.’

‘I can turn back, and come with you now.’

‘No, my dear Genevre, go with the boys. I will let you know.’

‘She has not sent for you?’

‘I will send if need be. I promise. Good day, Genèvre.’

He raised his hat, and bowed. She had no course but

to leave him. I saw her hesitate and bite her lip. Then she smiled, and started off down the hill. Waving back, she cried, 'I hope you like your new room, cousin !'

He watched her long after her figure had become minute and unrecognisable. He turned left, following a rough footpath, and pushed on over the hill and through a little wood till he came to a stonebuilt cottage. Lifting the latch, he stepped into the room. It was spotlessly clean, and though a fire burned it appeared at first to be empty. The Vicar drew a patchwork curtain. Behind, propped up with pillows, lay an old woman in a starched white cap. The curtain shielded the bed from draughts, whilst allowing a view of the fire.

'Mr. Thoroughgood, sir, you've come !' she said.

'I have come, Ellen.'

'You got my message ?'

As my eyes roamed round the room, something familiar in the furniture arrested them. It was the angle of the settle, a fixture. I recognised the cottage : it belonged to a family called Marchand, and still stands on Chesney Hill. I had often wished to move the settle forwards, but supposed that a study of draughts and doors had fixed its awkward position in the room.

The Vicar had seated himself near the bed.

'He's here, sir. The Vicomte,' said the old woman. Her thin hands moved nervously over the sheets. The fingers of one were bandaged.

'He's desperate. The runners will be after him, I think. No doubt he's wanted for something. 'Twouldn't be natural if he weren't. He's coming to you to-night, sir, for money.'

She stopped, and gasped for breath. He handed her some water.

'Can you get my lady away, sir?'

The Vicar shook his head.

'You let him know her name, Ellen?'

'I lied to him at first, sir, God help me, but he held my fingers over the candle, and I couldn't.'

She began to sob. The parson winced. He patted her shoulder tenderly.

'There, there, Ellen,' he said, 'you've been a brave and devoted woman. You've done well. He was bound to find out in any case and meet her husband.'

'You'll not let him do that, sir? The Squire's a proud man. He'd never forgive. He'd never get over it. Then there are her children.'

'He shall never know,' said the Vicar.

'Thank God, sir! I'm too old and too weak to save them. Ah, Mr. Thoroughgood, those days in France!' She began to ramble in the manner of the ill and aged, while he sat brooding by her; and her talk was not of the Terror, but of terror confined to a lonely château.

'Tell me, Ellen,' he said presently, 'tell me the truth. Did you know he was alive? Did she know?'

'I knew, sir. I heard it through a nephew of the gaoler. I knew, and kept it from her, God forgive me! But I think she always guessed. You won't blame her, sir?'

'No, I won't blame her.'

The latch lifted, and a little girl with a basket opened the door. The Vicar helped her to unpack it, chatting cheerfully and giving instructions about the invalid. Before leaving he deftly and gently re-bandaged the fingers.

'Ah, sir, you'll have done this a mort of times to do it so well,' she said.

He smiled and nodded. Then he set off on his three-mile walk to his vicarage, against the wind and the rain.

I found the house little changed from the present day but for hangings and furniture. I watched him eat his cold beef, drink his madeira, and sample his truckle of cheese, waited on by an aggressively starched, mob-capped, elderly maid. Whatever desperate venture the Vicar of Chesney had in mind his appetite suffered not a whit. I followed him up to his new room, where a comfortable fire burned. Book presses stood round the walls. It was his study.

From a cupboard he took some rapiers, examined them carefully, and laid them out on the mahogany table, with a decanter and glasses. From a bureau he took pens and paper, and occupied himself with writing, addressing, and sealing his letters, until all sounds from the kitchen quarter had ceased. Doors banged, footsteps mounted the stairs, gradually the house relapsed into the quiet of night. The Vicar took up a candle, and went his rounds. So assured and quiet were his movements that I felt he had done this in the same manner for years. He tested the shutters of the windows, tried the lock of the heavy, nail-studded front door, shot the bars and bolts of the back door.

Returning to his new room, he shuttered the large windows and then unlocked a small door at the back of the room. The door was partly glazed, and led on to a flight of stone steps which descended to the garden. It can still be traced, but the entrance is walled up. He had now secured the house from all entrance and exit except by this door. He placed a lighted candle on a table near it, and returned to the fire.

On the floor lay a heavy brass candelabra. The hook for its chain was already in the centre of the ceiling, but the chain had proved too long for the Vicar's liking. He made a few measurements, and marked the link to which it should be shortened. Then he returned to his writing.

He addressed certain letters, laid them out in his desk, and closed the lid. He had completed everything he had in mind. It remained only to wait. He took up a book.

The man slipped through the glazed door so silently that I was unaware of his presence till the parson turned his head.

‘I was expecting you, monsieur le vicomte. Will you be seated?’

He came forward easily, and sat down. The Vicar locked the garden door, and pocketed the key. The man turned suspiciously. I saw the light fall on the thin cruel line of his lips.

‘The old woman gave you my message?’

‘Yes.’ The Vicar filled his glass. The Frenchman raised it. There was a certain elegance in all his gestures, though his clothes were travel-stained. He spoke English easily.

‘You have the money ready, perhaps? I see, sir, you take things sensibly. A citizen of the world. I have made enquiries. The sum must be doubled. This new husband of my wife’s can pay; I have walked over his estates.’

‘I have no money ready,’ said the Vicar.

‘Your wine is good,’ said the Frenchman, ‘and your room comfortable. I congratulate you. I am in no hurry; I will wait.’

‘One question I should like to ask, monsieur le vicomte. A matter of curiosity. How did you escape from the September massacres?’

‘A piece of pure good luck, monsieur.’ The hooded eyes glittered with amusement. ‘I was confined, as perhaps you know, in one cell with my young cousin, a nice boy with the same name, Claude de Montmorency. He was sick with fever. His friends made every effort to

save him. The gaoler was bribed, and their plan confided to me. On the night of the rescue I placed the unfortunate youth, unconscious, under the bed, and took up his position myself. To be exact, it was the night before I was to meet Madame la Guillotine. The foolish gaoler bundled me out in his place. There were recriminations, of course, when the mistake was realised. I have never been popular with that side of the family.'

He paused, and took snuff.

'So the sick boy was the Claude de Montmorency who was guillotined?'

'Exactly, monsieur. Your mind works logically. Do not waste your sympathy. I assure you that in any case he would probably have died of fever. We must unfortunately meet our end in some unpleasant way. As men of the world we must consider the chance of mistaken identity. My wife's escape was also remarkable, and unknown to me at the time.'

'I see little likeness between them,' said the parson coldly. 'Will you choose your weapon, monsieur?'

'What do you mean?' The suave manner fell off like a glove. He was on his feet.

'I mean that only one of us shall leave this room alive,' said the Vicar.

'You flatter your swordsman, monsieur le curé. I am not unknown as a dueller. However, in this case, I prefer pistols.'

'In which you show less caution for your skin than I expected. A pistol would rouse my household, and, should you win, give you little start.'

'You allow it is possible for me to win,' said the Frenchman.

'No, I shall win in any case,' said the Vicar. 'The word

of the murderer of the Vicar of Chesney will not be taken, and your description is posted to the authorities. Your arrest is assured.'

'And if the vicar becomes the murderer?'

'I have considered a suitable way of disposing of you.'

Perhaps it was the coolness of the words; perhaps the workmanlike way the parson handled the rapiers; or the fact that those hooded eyes fell on the engraving behind the Vicar's head. It was one of the naval duels of the time between the *Bellerophon* and the *Festonbert*. The Frenchman's voice sharpened.

'Are you Thoroughgood of the *Bellerophon*?'

The parson nodded. 'But that was another cousin.'

'A case of mistaken identity,' said the Vicar.

Then the impending storm crashed. With a swift movement the vicomte drew a knife from under his coat, and struck downwards across the table between the Vicar's shoulders. The parson's movement was instinctive. He sprang sideways, throwing over the table. Rapiers and glasses crashed to the ground with the one he had been handling. The Frenchman picked himself up, and worked forward, crouching like a cat. The Vicar was weaponless. His eye fell on the candelabra. With astonishing agility for one of his weight he sprang towards it, kicking a chair across the legs of his oncoming foe. The Frenchman stumbled forward. With the force of a sledge-hammer the Vicar brought the ball of the candelabra on his skull. The Frenchman crumpled to the ground, and lay still.

For a moment, silence. Then came the sound of hurrying steps and banging doors, and cries of 'Mr. Thoroughgood.' The Vicar walked to the door and stepped out, closing it behind him.

'There has been an accident with the candelabra, Kate.

A deal of glass and furniture is broken. Fortunately I was in the study. You need not bother about it to-night. Leave it till the morning.'

'Yes, sir, but hadn't I better sweep it up? Glass is dangerous.'

'No, I'll do it. You can both go back to bed. You may hear me about for some while. I shall not go to bed yet.'

'I always said thick candelabra was dangerous. It might come down on someone's head one day.'

'Yes, I may get one of these new oil lamps now.'

The footsteps retired to bed, the Vicar returned. Calmly as before, he set about putting the room straight. He bent over the crumpled body. There was no need to examine him; the man was dead.

He carried candles down to the cellar below. Workmen's tools were still about, and a pile of mortar. The lid of the stone coffin was broken into several pieces. After removing them, the Vicar carried the Frenchman's body down, and arranged it in the stone box. His attitude had changed completely. He was the professional parson, ministering to the dead.

But of all his actions none was to surprise me more than that which followed the mortaring up of the coffin. He mounted deliberately to his study, and taking his surplice and a prayer book from a cupboard descended again and read the Burial Service. This he neither hurried nor whispered, but read at his normal rate and tone. His foe was not scamped of a single phrase or sentence.

Having disrobed and tidied the cellar, the Vicar burned the letters he had written before his visitor's arrival, and glanced round to see that all was well. His eye fell on a dark stain where the Frenchman's head had rested. When

this failed to respond to treatment he picked up a piece of broken glass, cut his wrist, and added his blood to the stain. Then, binding the wound, he retired to bed.

It must have been the following day, for the screen was suffused with daylight when I saw him again. He was climbing Chesney Hill, accompanied by the small girl from Marchand's cottage. I saw him enter the lonely house. The old woman's eyes asked the question. He answered at once.

'He is dead. He will never trouble her again, Ellen.'

Thankfulness lit the dying face. She smiled, and the smile remained after life had faded.

As he finished his prayers there came a knocking at the door, and the woman of the portrait entered.

'Ellen, Ellen!' she cried. And then the childish cry, 'Nurse! Dear nurse!'

He left her, and talked to her boys, waiting outside. When he returned she had composed herself, and was kneeling by the bed.

'You said you would send for me,' she said.

'I sent this morning, when the little maid came. There was no sign of change yesterday.'

'Her poor fingers are burnt. How dreadful! How careless! Did you notice, cousin?'

'Yes.'

'Your hand is wounded too.'

'Some broken glass,' he said.

She nodded, and I knew that the devotion of the dead woman and the living man would never be known in its full measure by her. She would accept it unconsciously. But behind her questions still lay the expectant fear in her eyes. Meeting that look he spoke, and chose his words deliberately.

‘Look at her face, Genèvre. It is content. All her life she was haunted by anxiety, a terrible fear lest some evil person she had known should return to injure one she loved. Before she died she knew that he was dead, dead without a question of doubt, that he would never return.’

The woman fell forward across the bed. Her body shook with sobs, no longer of mourning, but of relief. He knew, as he closed the door, that he would never see the hunted look in her eyes again.

The commissionaire touched my shoulder, and politely pointed out that the performance was over.

‘We air and disinfect before the next,’ he said.

I returned to my rooms, and wrote in full the account of what I had seen. I posted it that night to my old friend. He replied by postcard, for, he said, he was busy with his Harvest Thanksgiving. ‘I told you Thoroughgood was a sound man. If the ghost walks shall be tempted to use the candelabra again.’ He added that it was rotten weather for the harvest, and that he should like to see the cinema.

The odd point about it is that I have never been able to find it again. Either I have confused the streets, or it must have closed down. Such places have often a fugitive existence.

A SLANDEROUS BISHOP.

BY LORD OSSORY

EARLY accounts of trials held by Irish Ecclesiastical Courts are comparatively rare and in general rather void of interest. There is, however, the account of one trial among the Ormond MSS. which are being calendared for the Irish Manuscripts Commission, by Professor E. Curtis, of Trinity College, Dublin, which by reason of its unusual charges make these musty deeds a little more human, and for a short space brings into the limelight an unimportant bishop of five hundred years ago and tells of his sins and tribulations.

On the 13th of December, 1380, the King's Lieutenant and his household met in the King's Chapel in the Castle of Dublin for a solemn occasion. Edmund Mortimer, the 3rd Earl of March, had landed a few months previously to take up his duties as Lord-Lieutenant. Having married Philippa, daughter of Lionel Duke of Clarence, he acquired through her the titles, and the overlordship that accompanied them, of the Earl of Ulster and Lord of Connaught. He had at once raised an army, and marching northward had received the homage of the Ulster chiefs. On his return to Dublin, where he meant to raise more troops, he learnt of the death of his wife, Philippa. At his command, a solemn Requiem Mass for the repose of her soul was to be celebrated in the King's Chapel. With his officers and household in attendance, and with many others of rank and importance present, the Lord-Lieutenant took his place.

The celebrant at this solemn Mass was the Venerable Bishop of Cloyne. Clad in his vestments before the High

Altar, he turned to recite the Preface. He had come to the words 'Eterne Deus' when the startled congregation found themselves listening to strange words which were surely foreign to any prayer that they had made before. With increased attention, they heard the Bishop chanting in a high, clear voice 'Eterne Deus, there are two in Munster who destroy us and our goods, namely the Earl of Ormond and the Earl of Desmond with their followers, whom in the end the Lord will destroy through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.'

One can well imagine the consternation that reigned when this irreverent and untimely attack was made on two of the most powerful lords in Ireland. Very properly 'Hearing which the Earl of March, the King's Lieutenant, and all great and small were greatly scandalised and hoping that he was only out of his mind, at once removed themselves.' But for the Clergy, the Chapel was now empty. These tried to persuade the Bishop to cease from such 'shocking words,' but the Bishop, 'like a Heretic, persisted in defending them and so on following days in High and Private Masses, openly used them in place of the true Preface, altering and omitting the Divine Words and, what is worse, at the end of the said Masses did communicate the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ without Charity, Confession or Amendment, saying that he had a Right thus to feel and teach.' An outspoken man, this Bishop of Cloyne.

Of his career before and after these dreadful incidents, little enough is known. All that one can learn is that Richard Wye, a Carmelite Friar and an Englishman, was appointed to the see of Cloyne in 1376 by Pope Gregory XI. Cloyne, which is situated a few miles from Cork, was, at that date, in the Archbishopric of Cashel. It is reasonable to assume that Richard had visited his see, which at that period

was not a universal habit among Englishmen who had been provided with an Irish diocese. Cloyne was in the territory over which the Fitzgeralds held sway and theirs was not always a benevolent rule. In fact, in the last hundred years, fighting, raids, robberies and other unpleasantnesses had been almost continual. If Richard wished to leave his see and visit Dublin, he would, unless he took ship, have to pass through the Butler country, which was scarcely less uncomfortable and dangerous for travellers than was that of the Fitzgeralds. In fact, the only respite which the Diocese and its Bishop might enjoy from 'murder, fire and sudden death' were the times when the Butlers and the Fitzgeralds were busy fighting one another.

Filled with a bitter hate against the leaders of these powerful factions, Richard determined to air his grievances before the new Lord-Lieutenant. Had he previously sought an audience of March and been refused? Had an audience been granted and his complaints dismissed as trivial? Was he, as his hearers imagined, really a little mad? History is silent on these points, but whichever may have been the truth, he eventually decided on this unorthodox method of denouncing the two Earls and invoking God's help for their destruction. Having once taken the plunge, he, thereafter, on every possible occasion continued to repeat the charges, always in the Preface of the Mass. 'All which proceedings,' adds the account, 'were so notorious and public that they could not be concealed by any artifice.' They certainly came to the ears of the Earl of Ormond, who forthwith brings a plaint of slander, defamation and injury against the Bishop of Cloyne. It is not recorded that the Earl of Desmond took any similar action. It may be that the news took a longer time to reach him, or that when it did reach him he contemplated having a personal interview with the Bishop

in his diocese. It might be possible, but hardly probable, that he felt there was perhaps a grain of truth in the charge made against him. Whatever the reason, Desmond remained silent and made no effort to refute the charges made against him and his enemy.

The scene now changes to Cashel. The Rock of Cashel rises out of the plain of Tipperary, a rock which, according to legend, the devil hurled after the fleeing saint, whose name it bears. Luckily, his aim was inaccurate, but the Devil's Bit and the Rock itself are still to be seen by any unbelievers. The Rock, for that or other reasons, has always been looked upon as a place for worship. To this day, there is to be seen on its summit a Druidical altar and one of the old round towers. There too is the chapel, a gem of early architecture, built by King Cormac in A.D. 900. Abutting on the chapel stands the now roofless walls of the Cathedral built in 1200 by Donald O'Brien, King of Limerick. An imposing setting for the trial of a bishop.

The titular Archbishop of Cashel was one Philip de Torrington, although at the time with which our story deals he had actually died in England, whither he had returned from Rome after his appointment as Ambassador to Pope Urban VI. It is recorded that he had returned thence 'with many powers of binding and loosing' and had preached many sermons urging King Richard to invade France. The news of his death had not reached Cashel and the affairs of the Archbishopric were in the hands of the Bishop of Emly, whom Philip de Torrington had appointed to be his Vicar-General. It was to the Bishop of Emly that in due course came the Earl of Ormond's accusation.

After an examination of the case, he ordered under Letters Patent, 'that Richard Bishop of Cloyne do appear in the

Cathedral church of Cashel on the 21st day of February, 1381, to shew cause why he should not be proceeded against for slander and heresy.' On the appointed day the Vicar-General took his place in the judgment seat surrounded by a great company of clerks. He disposed of a few minor cases, and then, with all the solemn procedure demanded by so important an event, he caused the Bishop of Cloyne to be summoned. But Richard Bishop of Cloyne was called in vain. He had either gone or was on the point of departure to England, where he thought the climate would be more healthy for him. Then came a succession of adjournments and summons. The Vicar-General now appointed the 'last day but one of March' and summoned the Bishop for that day. Once more the scene in the Cathedral was repeated, only on this occasion the Earl of Ormond appeared in person, and finding that the Bishop had ignored the summons, now added the charge of contumacy to his plaint. The Bishop was then called several times from the great door of the church, but with no answer. The Vicar-General had then no course but to declare him 'Contumacious and accursed.' In spite of the notoriety which had been given to these charges of slander, heresy, schism, and now contumacy, against Richard of Cloyne, he seemed curiously reluctant to pronounce judgment, for he appointed the 27th April for the Bishop to answer the summons. Again no Richard, but the Vicar-General received a Notarial Instrument from the Earl of Ormond, repeating an account of the offence with a list of names of some of the 'Venerable and Discreet Men' who were present at the time. He also appended the sworn evidence of two witnesses.

'Master David Watvylle, Clerk, swears that he asked the said Bishop in a room of John Colton, Dean of St. Patricks,

Dublin, whether he had said and sung the said Preface whereupon the Bishop not only admitted it but defended it, and said he would add more to it when the time came.'

Peter Hacket, Archdeacon of Cashel (and later Archbishop), swears that he heard the Bishop in the City of Waterford admit to have sung and said the said Preface.

Armed with these new documents, the Vicar-General once more summoned the slanderous and contumacious Bishop to appear for the 14th of May. Again the Earl of Ormond was present and for the fourth time recited the now familiar charges before Richard FitzStephen, the Treasurer of the Cathedral, the Vicar-General having appointed him his Commissioner since owing to the dangers of the road he was unable to reach Cashel. The Bishop was called again, and there still being no reply, the Treasurer closed the case by precluding the Bishop from any 'further' denials of the charge, and decreed that the final judgment would be given on the 21st of May.

Measures must have been taken to clear the roads from Emly to Cashel from all robbers and other dangers, for on the appointed day the Vicar-General took his seat once more in the Cathedral. The Earl of Ormond, determined that his good name should be cleared of all calumny, attended the Court and, it is hardly necessary to add, Richard Bishop of Cloyne did not do so. With due ceremonial, the Vicar-General, after a recital of the offences, pronounced judgment on the Bishop of Cloyne.

The charge of Heresy is to be committed to the Holy See as being too grave a matter to be dealt with by all lesser courts.

On the charge of slander, the accused is condemned to major excommunication.

The damages that are awarded to the Earl of Ormond

are 'fifty marks save one' for slander and injury 'and forty pounds save twelve pence' for costs.

So after lengthy proceedings and many comings and goings ended a case which the Vicar-General described in a letter to his herald Maynys O'Moyn as 'a wicked slander before good and worthy men, to the scandal of clergy and people, and causing unheard of schism between clergy and people.'

Of the subsequent career of the excommunicated Bishop, little is known. He fled into England. In what manner the charge of heresy was dealt with is a matter for conjecture, but the see of Cloyne was empty in 1394. Yet Richard Wye, late of Cloyne, at some time during the fourteen years subsequent to his trial, returned to Ireland and acted as Bishop, for we read in Ware's *Antiquities of Ireland*: 'King Richard II being the next year (1395) at Waterford commanded him to be apprehended and committed to custody to Peter Hacket, Archbishop of Cashel.'

A WOMAN ON THE GOLD COAST.

BY ANITA MOSTYN.

THERE are few corners of the world nowadays into which women have not found their way. The misogynist has got to travel far afield to be completely safe from their intrusion.

When I first went to the Gold Coast to make a home on an isolated gold-mining prospect in the Ashanti Forest, I had considerable misgivings as to what my reception by the miners might be. I soon discovered, however, that man's age-old prejudice against women trespassing upon his preserves is dying a natural death, and I think that this is largely due to the fact that the modern woman expects few privileges and is usually prepared to pull her weight.

There are certainly many opportunities for her to do so on some of these mining camps, where the domestic side of life is apt to get neglected by men working long hours in the bad climate.

Our bungalow was built in a small clearing in the forest, about three-quarters of a mile from the mine, and our nearest town, which consisted of three stores and a few shacks, was forty miles away. To get to it, we had to motor by lorry along a forest track for about ten miles, cross a very wide river in a very leaky canoe, and finally tranship into a car for the last thirty miles. The forest track was bad at all times, but during the rains became so boggy and rutted that we, in the front seat, had to cling on like grim death, and the 'boys,' who clustered like limpets at the back, often fell off as we went along amidst shrieks of laughter from the

lucky ones who had managed to keep their seats. Many times the lorry stuck altogether in the mud. Sometimes it had to be abandoned until the next day, but if we were lucky and carried sufficient boys, an hour or two of hard work would get us going again.

The West Coast was once known as the 'White Man's Grave,' and although conditions have improved enormously in the towns, nature remains the same, and there are still many deaths amongst white men in the bush. It appeared to me that many of these deaths were avoidable and were due to unsuitable food and to neglecting the many health rules necessary in such a climate. A woman who has leisure can do quite a lot of good by careful 'housekeeping' and 'catering.'

When I first went out the miners were feeding almost entirely on tinned food, and they seldom saw fresh vegetables. Although a great many English vegetables will grow, they need far more care and attention than they do at home.

It is true that black labour is plentiful and cheap, but unskilled natives require constant supervision, and, naturally, after a long day's work in the gruelling heat, nobody has much time or energy left for gardening.

We started a garden very soon after my arrival in the country, and, although it was often very disheartening, we did eventually manage to get quite a lot of vegetables to grow. For week after week it was a perpetual battle; one pest after another destroyed the seeds, and those that did come up were attacked by rats and mice. The tropical sun and the rain then took their toll, while tornados had a habit of springing up suddenly and carrying our seed-boxes away. We managed to overcome these difficulties to some extent by putting the boxes on legs standing in tins of water, which prevented the white ants from eating the

boxes and the other pests from eating the seeds. Palm branches laid over the beds sheltered them from the sun and rain, with the result that about one seed in every ten shot up into a flourishing plant. But there were still tornadoes to be reckoned with, and against these there is no defence.

The greatest drawback to the country is, of course, the climate. There are parts of the world that are hotter, but it is the dampness of the heat which makes one always feel so uncomfortable, as though one had slept all night in one's clothes in a stuffy railway carriage. But in spite of these troubles, in spite of the mosquitoes which carry fever and disease, in spite of the poisonous snakes and scorpions that lurk in the undergrowth and the sluggish rivers in which to drink or bathe is to risk some horrible malady such as Guinea Worm or Bilharzia, the West African bush has its advantages. Life is completely free, and one's house is literally one's castle. There are no rates and few taxes, building expenses are very low, and last but not least, there is no servant problem. That heartbreaking chase from one Domestic Agency to the other is unknown. A cook whose highest culinary achievement is a 'nice' rice pudding is not a treasure to be clung to in deadly fear that no other can be got. If a servant is no good, you sack him, and the next day a dozen others are waiting at your door begging to be taken on.

All the work of our house was performed with the most primitive materials. The floors were swept with bundles of palm leaves and the bungalow was usually dusted with a pair of old trousers belonging to my husband. Our kitchen consisted of a tin roof on four wooden posts, and the range was a curious contraption of clay and petrol-tins. Nothing but wood was ever burnt, but the delicious omelets

and soufflés, curries and soups which our cook produced would have done justice to most English chefs.

Most natives have a good idea of housework and they are generally very clean. Even the smallest boy will quickly learn to make beds and lay tables and fold napkins into shapes which would put Mrs. Beeton to shame.

I heard many grumbles about the stupidity of the natives, but my own experience was that although their brains worked slowly they made much better servants than most white people. What they lacked in initiative they made up for in devotion and would carry out the smallest order whether I was there or not. They work for you because they like you and not because they must, and their loyalty and faithfulness is astonishing and sometimes finds amusing expression.

I remember once going on trek with my husband and Jonah, our steward boy. We motored all day, and at night slept in our camp beds in rest houses. These rest houses are just empty huts belonging to the Government or to the local chief, in which travellers may spend the night.

It is a custom of the country for the Chief to supply travellers with water and firewood. On this particular occasion these did not appear and Jonah went to discover why. When he returned we asked him what the Chief had said.

‘He said,’ replied Jonah, ‘that you no big master, you be small master, so he no send you wood.’

‘And what did you tell him?’ asked my husband.

‘I tell him you very big master—I tell him you the *manager*.’

Although we were many miles from the mine the word manager seemed to work like magic and the Chief was very impressed and supplied us with every comfort. In fact, we

were treated royally for the rest of our stay and were visited with many apologies by the Chief's clerk.

The Chief, he explained, was unable to visit us in person as he had only been instated the previous day, the old Chief having been recently destooled—that is, deposed ; in short, he was suffering from a sick headache as a result of the recent celebrations. Later we heard the full story of the change of government.

It appeared that the old Chief had been destooled for misappropriating stool funds, so the previous one had been reinstated.

‘ And why was the first one destooled at all ? ’ we asked.

‘ For the same reason but a smaller amount,’ was the reply.

In spite of the magnificent gold ornaments and gaudy umbrellas that these chiefs sport on festive occasions, they are often, in private life, more primitive than their villagers.

In a small village up country the stool retinue arrived with presents for us of chickens, yams, eggs and bananas.

The Chief was a fat and dirty old man with, wound around his body, a still more dirty cloth over which rolls of fat literally bulged ; the Queen Mother, a skinny witch, limped up leaning on a huge stick, wearing bangles of pure gold up to her elbows, and huge earrings, then followed a naked child or two and finally a troop of boys bearing yams and bananas on their heads and swinging the chickens rather callously by the legs. We shook hands with the Chief and, through our interpreter, wished each other long lives and large families. When the palaver was over the old Chief eyed the remains of our breakfast with evident covetousness, and eventually, being unable to contain himself any longer, he ordered one of the little boys to pick up

some bits of paper off the ground, and, collecting the scraps off our plates, he wrapped them up and took them away.

Another Queen Mother came to visit us on the mine one day, bringing samples of rock from her land for us to assay for gold. When this had been done and the retinue was moving off with great dignity, the old lady surreptitiously doubled on her tracks and pointed, first to her mouth and then to a bottle of gin which she had seen in our bungalow.

Gin is the 'open sesame' in West Africa. It is drunk at all festivities; all debates and palavers, meetings and partings are celebrated with gin. Often the graves of the chiefs are decorated with upturned gin bottles! We constantly received letters from our village Chief asking for a bottle of gin to celebrate the death of a brother, or for some other festive occasion. Unfortunately the term 'brother' is a rather elastic one in Africa, as it applied to almost any relation, so that these death festivities were practically continuous during my stay on the mine.

For some time we thought it good policy to supply the Chief with gin when he asked for it, but when he took to demanding sheep and even oxen for sacrifice to propitiate the gods for imaginary outrages on the part of our 'boys,' we refused point-blank. The Chief was in no way daunted. He sacrificed an ox in the village so that the gods would enable us to find gold in the mine. Some of the meat was brought to us to eat and with it we were very pleased, since meat, other than buck, was hard to get. The next day a deputation arrived asking that we should pay for the ox. We sent back word that we saw no reason to do this until the gods had seen fit to grant their request.

Shortly afterwards tremendous values were found in a sample from the shaft. According to the rule another sample

from the same place was tested. Only the normal quantity of gold was found . . . we did not pay for the ox.

On another occasion the 'boys' suddenly refused to descend a certain shaft. After many enquiries one of them told us that a two-headed woman had been seen down there by one of the hammer boys working on the night shift. Nothing would persuade them to go down until the Chief himself had sacrificed a sheep at the shaft head.

Most of the natives from the towns give the impression of being extremely civilised. Nearly all of those that worked for us spoke English of a kind and a great many could read and write. In the town they cultivate a very sophisticated appearance, and walk about arrayed in all the magnificence of silk shirts, homburg hats, black striped trousers, and often enormous horn-rimmed spectacles. They love making use of all the amenities of civilisation that are within their reach, the chief being lawsuits, upon which they embark on the slightest provocation. They will always use a long word when they can bring one in, but at letter writing they really excel and even those that cannot write will go to the village clerk, who will produce a long and pompous epistle whenever asked, however futile the subject. These letters were generally anonymous and often libellous.

My husband once employed an excellent 'boy' on the mine of whom the other natives were very jealous. They tried every means in their power to make us get rid of him. Finally an anonymous letter arrived, saying that perhaps we were not aware that the boy, Kofi Atta, was taking the mud out of my husband's footprints to make a love potion so that he should love him. Finding that this did not worry anybody, another letter followed, also unsigned, saying that Atta was putting powdered glass into our food so that we should die. This warning we also ignored, but we began

to feel a little uneasy when we noticed that all our food was somewhat gritty. The grit, luckily for us, was found to be sand, but it was obviously an effort on somebody's part to make us get rid of Kofi Atta. The matter was handled firmly and all settled down.

Beneath all the veneer of sophistication barbaric customs still survive amongst the natives. One of our neighbouring chiefs had a collection of drums covered with human skin, and I am told that after I left there was a little trouble in that quarter owing to the fact that he was caught making an addition to his collection. I believe that there is one of these drums in the War Museum in Edinburgh.

Human sacrifices also are occasionally indulged in, and after the death of a Chief or Elder, boys who are strangers to the place are very unwilling to leave the safety of the compound.

So much for civilisation ; it has not penetrated very deep as yet and perhaps, for some reasons, this is a good thing.

Education does not seem to bring out the best points in an African native. They are like children in the simplicity of their minds and if handled like children they are easy to manage. In spite of their efforts to emulate us they still consider a white man or woman their superior and are only too willing to learn from them and to respect them.

Perhaps their most attractive quality is their enormous sense of humour. They always seem to manage to see the funny side of a situation. The terrible forest tracks over which the lorry had to travel might have been in a fun fair especially constructed for their amusement. I shall never forget our lorry-driver's laughter when, during the floods, the lorry almost disappeared in about four feet of mud and water. The fact that it was his business and that of his mates to dig it out seemed to worry him not at all. I

remember the shouts of mirth when Coco, one of the mechanics, dressed in spotless white ducks for a visit to the town, slipped backwards and got up plastered with mud from head to foot. The loudest laughter of all came from Coco himself.

It is this spirit that oils the wheels of life in West Africa and helps one to forget that it can still justify its name 'The White Man's Grave.'

A great many of the white men treat their native workmen in what appears to be a very familiar way, but familiarity with a native does not seem to 'breed contempt' nor prevent them from taking a rebuke, even if administered with a stick. They never seem to bear a grudge as long as they are treated fairly, and even when we gave some of our boys notice for misbehaviour they would crop up again in the most unexpected places with a radiant smile as though they had left our employment under the happiest circumstances.

We had two boys whom we sacked at the same time. One was a chauffeur, Kwaku, who, we discovered, was using our car during our absence for driving his girl friends around the town in which we were staying at the time. The other, Thomas, was a steward boy who developed an incurable jealousy of the cook, which led to endless complications. Both left under a cloud, to put it mildly, and we certainly had no wish nor expectation of ever seeing them again.

Some months later we were in Accra, a town many hundreds of miles from the mine. We were doing some shopping in one of the larger shops of which Accra is very proud. There was a crowd of sedate customers of both colours strolling from counter to counter and talking in subdued undertones. Suddenly the peace was disturbed by a loud shout of joy and an immaculate African, clad in a spotless

white suit, a felt hat and bow tie, rushed to greet us. After the thread-bare khaki shorts which he usually wore for work when with us it took us a minute or two to recognise Thomas. With a beaming smile he wrung our hands. He was well employed, so the gesture had no ulterior motive. On leaving the shop we found Kwaku sitting in the car at the wheel, guarding it from the onslaughts of some little boys. He greeted us also with the greatest enthusiasm and insisted on driving us from shop to shop and taking charge of the car whilst we were inside. I never understood how they found us, as Accra is a big town with a fairly large population and our visit was entirely unpremeditated.

Another example of the feelings of the African servant for his master is shown by a rather amusing letter from a boy to his master whilst on leave in England. In this case, however, the affection is not entirely untainted with worldly wisdom.

‘DEAR MASTER,’ it says,

‘Please come back soon. . . . I wish I were a bird so that I could fly to you.

‘Your humble boy . . .

‘P.S. Please send me a wrist-watch.’

But to ‘sum up’ as they say in legal circles, West Africa is a grim country in spite of having a humorous side. Death stalks through its forests and lies hidden in its swamps and rivers; but death which somehow holds less fear, whilst life holds less complications. A life out of doors, without conventions or affectations, amongst simple people who have not forgotten how to laugh. Where servants mourn you when you go away and run to meet you with genuine joy when you return home. A country, beautiful, with luxuriant growth, with giant trees and a tangle of undergrowth, with ropes of creepers which festoon above your

paths. The emerald green of the leaves and the red earth reminds one of some brilliant operatic world, but it is a hard world. No subtlety of colour or tenderness of growth fill the eye with promise, as do the soft beauties of an English spring. It is like a painted world against a painted sky, too crude for wonder, too unchanging for expectation; and when the glories of sunset come upon you, when for one short hour the sun is setting in radiant gold behind the trees, when the trees themselves, like huge black ogres, stretch their branches against the darkening sky, there is none of the magic of an English sunset; but, like watching some magnificent transformation scene in a theatre, one stands astonished and awaiting the final curtain—the blackness of an African night.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

*Now sleep you soft, Beloved,
But dreamless, through the years,
For death should prove, Beloved,
A last farewell to tears.
And dreams wound more, Beloved,
Than life, though life bring pain :
So sleep you soft, Beloved—
You shall not dream again.*

JANETTA REYNOLDS.

MR. GILLESPIE.

BY HAROLD FORRESTER.

ALL bookshops have queer customers. The strangest we have had in my time was a man whose name we never knew. He came about us for nearly five years, bought many books from us, spent long hours with us, talked with us, knew us by our names, but never gave us his own. Nor did we ever learn it.

He came to us first after the War, and he was typically pre-War. I think, indeed, that if one had wished to discover a specimen of the finest type of late Victorian gentleman, he would have proved the ideal. He was of medium height ; his face was pale and wrinkled or lined by furrows ; he had white hair and grey mutton-chop whiskers ; his eyes were clear blue and his glance was piercing. He wore invariably a black lounge jacket and waistcoat, and he always carried an umbrella. In all things he was precise, in speech, in walk in manners. He knew exactly what he wanted, and he made sure that he got it. When he bought a book it had to be perfect, and he paid for none till he was sure that it was without flaw. His practice was to ask that some particular book should be procured for him merely to see. When it came he would look it over well, and if he were satisfied that it seemed all right he would ask if he might take it away to examine it thoroughly. A few days later he would bring it back, pay for it, and take it away again. Sometimes, but not often, he had it packed securely for posting, but always he took it away himself.

As I said before, he never gave us his name and we never asked it. Perhaps, in these days of efficiency, our trustfulness would not be commended, for we gave him expensive books without having his name and address or any reference. We were younger than he and he had an air which made it seem an impertinence to question his good faith. He, for his part, accepted the trust and did not once comment upon it. That we took as a compliment and one of the finest we have ever been paid.

I shall not pretend that we were incurious about him. He was obviously a personage living incognito, but one could respect his wish to remain unknown yet try to find out something about him. My colleague and I—we were of an age—used to talk over his conversations at the end of the day, seeking some clue in a passing remark. He had known William Cory, but whether at Eton or later we could never be sure. He had known Gladstone and Disraeli, but again we could never tell whether as friends or political acquaintances. For Gladstone his admiration was tempered by distrust for his verbiage; for Disraeli it was tempered by suspicion of his showmanship. He was a classical scholar—how greatly he appreciated the Loeb library!—and I remember how his hopes rose high when a report came that the lost books of Livy had been found. I recall, too, that he was not unduly depressed when the rumour proved false. There was a great deal of Balfourian doubt in his composition.

One great enthusiasm he did have and that was for the publishing house of Murray. 'The King of Publishers,' he would often remark, and his face seemed to light up when he handled a Murray book. As for his pleasure when, having asked for some new book, he was told it was published by John Murray, it was a joy to see.

‘John Murray ! Ah ! Then I should like to see it. It should be good.’

Had he known one of the family ? Here again we never knew.

In time we pieced together a fragmentary biography. He had been at Eton and Cambridge, Trinity College we fancied, and in time he was given a Fellowship and spent the rest of his life there till the end of the War. Then he retired as the flood of a new generation began to sweep in. The War had aged him and he did not feel equal to coping with these youngsters. For some reason—we could never find an adequate—Edinburgh called him and he came North and stayed.

He had never married. His library and most of his possessions had been sold when he left Cambridge. A small flat in a quiet street was all that he required and there he settled down to spend his last days. A housekeeper looked to his modest needs and he did no entertaining since—again for no apparent reason—he had cut himself off from old friends. His life was regular. A short walk in the forenoon before lunch, a rest, possibly a short sleep after, then another walk, generally with a purpose such as calling upon us, then home for dinner made up his day. The evening would be passed in reading—and so to bed.

Thus we pictured him and his life, and we may have been wrong in every guess, because no piece of confirmation ever came our way. He remained a mystery always and I think he knew that we regarded him as a mystery, for once he jested with us on the subject. We knew that he lived in a street called Gillespie Crescent and we gave him the name ‘Gillespie’ for purposes of reference. Once he was given a book that he had ordered and in it was a slip marked ‘Mr. Gillespie.’

‘But this is not for me,’ he said.

My colleague explained that we had called him this for convenience, not knowing his name.

‘But why Gillespie?’

At this my colleague, in some confusion, explained that it was because I had seen him going to and fro in the neighbourhood of Gillespie Crescent.

‘Ah! Just as I might call *him* “Mr. Barclay,”’ he replied, with a twinkle in his eye. As this was the name of the street in which I lived we saw that the observation was not all one-sided. But he made no further advance.

He continued to be a mystery man till the end, for a time came when we saw him no more. On his last visit he wore—the only occasion we had known him do so—an overcoat and a scarf protecting his throat. He seemed tired and there was no spring in his walk. He paid for a book, talked for a minute or two, bade us ‘Good evening,’ and went out. We never saw him again.

About a month later we had a call from his housekeeper. She had felt that she must tell us that our old friend had died three weeks before. He had passed out peacefully in his sleep. The funeral had been private and there were no relatives present, nor had she heard of any. He had left no will and a firm of lawyers was clearing up his affairs. For some reason—or for none—she did not mention his name and we did not ask. He had never told us and we were content not to know.

EPICS OF THE ALPS.

BY C. F. MEADE.

II.

AN EPISODE ON THE DRU.

ON the gigantic cliffs of the Little Dru, that superb aiguille dominating the lower reaches of the great glacier at Chamonix known as the Mer-de-glace, French, Swiss and Italian mountaineers a few years ago fought a heroic battle against the forces of nature, and this epic struggle that lasted four days and three nights deserves to be recorded.

The two Drus, when seen from the Montenvers, produce the impression of a monolith soaring miraculously into the sky to a single sharp point, but this apparent pyramid is in reality divided at a height of about 12,000 feet into two peaks known as the Great Dru and the Little Dru, 12,315 and 12,247 feet respectively. An English climber who in 1883 made the second ascent of the Little Dru, wrote of it as follows :

‘The race of mountaineers may greatly improve as time goes on, and laugh our puny efforts to scorn ; yet I believe the ascent of the upper portion of the western Aiguille de Dru will always rank high among the most difficult rock-climbs in the Alps.’

Certainly time has not falsified this prophecy. Nevertheless, if the conditions of snow, rock and weather are favourable, the ascent nowadays does not generally take more than six hours from the club-hut, and on the 12th of August in 1928 the conditions happened to be such that the four young

guideless Frenchmen who had come up to the hut that day had every prospect of getting up and down the mountain in good time. If Jean Choisy, Jean Charignon and Georges Clot were relatively rather inexperienced for such an exacting expedition, Pierre Daurensen, who joined them from Lyon at the last moment, was a guideless climber who was accustomed to lead on first-class peaks. By the irony of fate it was he that was destined to be the cause of the tragedy that eventually overtook them.

The next day, Monday, the weather was doubtful, so that the young men only reconnoitred the route, and remained in the hut most of the day. On Tuesday their alarum woke them at half-past one in the morning, but as the weather was still doubtful they waited till it grew finer, and then set out at seven o'clock, a late hour for starting such an important undertaking. At first all went well, and they climbed fast on two ropes, Choisy leading Charignon, and Daurensen leading Clot. For the first two or three hours the difficulties are not excessive, and the whole party reached the shoulder of the mountain without incident. From here the route follows alternately either side of the south-west ridge, over 'terrace after terrace of forbidding rock' as an earlier climber has described it. There is a succession of what are called 'chimneys,' interrupted by vertical walls of rock, 'chimney' being the name given to cracks or narrow gullies which have to be climbed by inserting hand and foot, or sometimes the whole body. As time went on, the climbers zigzagged to and fro over precariously narrow ledges in order to get from one chimney to another. Signor Guido Rey has described his own reactions in scaling this tremendous precipice :

'I began,' he says, 'to feel a tingling in my shoulders. The hardest part of the work fell to the upper muscles ; in such climbs as these it is not the legs that push the body up,

but the arms that pull it, and the knees act as props to keep the body away from the rock, while the feet become useless appendages, and swing in space.'

So complete a reversal of the normal procedure in climbing usually implies that the mountain which calls for such awkward manoeuvres is getting the better of its assailant.

After some three hours of this sort of gymnastics the four young men had almost reached the top of the mountain, and just as the second pair had surmounted what is known as the 'petit mur vertical,' all the serious difficulties of the climb being disposed of, Daurensen, who was working his way up a crack, found that he was awkwardly placed, and attempted to alter the position of his hands. Suddenly he became exhausted, and, crying out 'I'm letting go' ('Je lâche'), slipped backwards. Clot, who was behind him, managed to check the impetus of the fall with the rope, so that Daurensen landed on a small platform after falling only four or five yards, but in doing so he received severe injuries to his back.

The situation was now very serious, for although Daurensen remained conscious he had lost the use of his limbs, and the party were in an utterly exposed position, close to the summit of the Dru, with their injured companion suffering such pain that evidently the three men that were available would not be able to move him very far. The accident had happened at midday, and by four o'clock they had only been able to lower him about a hundred and twenty feet. It was obvious that something drastic must be done, and it was decided that Choisy and Charignon should hasten down at their utmost speed in hopes of fetching a search-party from Montenvers or Chamonix to bring down Daurensen the very next day if possible. Clot, meanwhile, volunteered to stay with Daurensen to look after him.

Even in midsummer a night in the open at 12,000 feet may

be a terrible or even fatal ordeal. Rey wrote of his own similar, but less dreadful experience :

‘ By night a mountain’s mighty limbs are as still as if frozen to death, and its gigantic face stiffens into an immutable expression of mystery. . . . I instinctively clasped my arms to my breast that I might feel the warmth of my own body, and protect it from freezing in that embrace of stone.’

Fortunately the night was calm and relatively warm for such heights as this. The two who were to fetch help sped downwards at such a pace that by stumbling on through the night they reached the Montenvers at one o’clock on Wednesday morning, and a few hours later had given the alarm in Chamonix.

Meanwhile on the same day one of the leading guides in Chamonix, Camille Tournier, who had heard the news of the accident on his way to the club-hut, was organising the despatch of guides and climbers, with the result that a rescue-party of ten men reached the hut late on Wednesday night.

The weather was now threatening. Earlier in the day, however, three men from Geneva, the brothers Albert and Charles Fiaroli, and their friend Joseph Paillard, with an Italian party, Giuseppi Gandi and Nigra, evidently all of them first-rate guideless climbers, had left the hut, and, regardless of weather, were gallantly racing up the mountain, carrying food and clothing as well as a spirit-cooker. They succeeded in reaching Clot and the injured man by three o’clock that afternoon. There were now ominous signs of an imminent storm, so the five men with the assistance of Clot made desperate attempts to get Daurensen down the mountain, but in vain. All they could do was to lower him to a less exposed position on a tiny shelf in the cliff, and to build what stones they could into an inadequate shelter behind which the two men might pass a second night in the open. Clot had

absolutely refused to leave his friend, and the two rescue-parties, before reluctantly turning to descend, handed over all their food and even their underclothes, an act of unselfish heroism which, alas, was to have fatal consequences.

The night that followed was terrible, both for the two men crouching on their shelf, and for the five good Samaritans descending foodless and underclad. Beginning at a quarter to seven that evening, and lasting throughout the night, one of the worst storms that had been known for many years raged continuously, deluging the cliffs of the Dru with snow and hail. The wind was so violent that trees were uprooted even down at Chamonix.

The next day, Thursday, at seven in the morning, Tournier's party of guides, who had spent the night at the hut, found four inches of snow on the ground, and, looking up the Charpoua Glacier, caught sight of the Swiss rescue-party returning, in the act of descending on to the glacier, after their all-night descent of the rocks of the Little Dru. It was terribly evident that they were in a state of complete collapse from exposure and exhaustion. After them came the Italians, who, perhaps more wisely, had bivouacked higher up, where there seemed to be a little more shelter. As the guides who went to bring in the three Swiss were carrying Joseph Paillard down to the hut, he died in their arms. Only the two Italians were able to descend unaided. It was fortunate that an English doctor named Shelford, undeterred by the fact that he was not a mountaineer, had climbed up to the hut in the hope of being useful, for his treatment with camphor injections revived the Fiaroli brothers, and probably saved their lives.

Meanwhile, during Thursday morning, up at the ghastly bivouac, Daurenson appeared to be dying, and Clot, as he subsequently admitted, had begun to despair. Suddenly a

break came in the clouds, and, before it closed again, he saw, infinitely far below, and yet distinctly enough to be convincing, dots like men approaching across the Charpoua Glacier. What he saw was his indefatigable friend, Choisy, returning up the mountain with another climber, Stoffer, who had volunteered to help. These two men had come up to the hut with Charignon, and then, although it was already noon, and although the snow everywhere covering the rocks had decided the guides congregated in the hut to postpone all attempts at rescue till next day, this gallant pair, Choisy and Stoffer, started together undismayed. In only six hours' climbing, in spite of the appalling conditions, they reached Clot at his bivouac, and found that the unfortunate Daurenson had died at one o'clock that afternoon. They had reached the bivouac too late for the three men to do more than abandon the narrow rock-shelf where the body of Daurenson was lying, and then establish themselves a little lower down the precipice in a slightly more sheltered situation for passing another night in the open. This was the devoted Clot's third night on the mountain.

Dawn broke clear on Friday. There were by now no less than eighteen persons assembled in the hut, and a general assault upon the Dru had been planned for this day. At this juncture, however, there burst upon the scene with the violence of a hurricane the romantic figure of Armand Charlet, the leading spirit of the *élite* of the Chamonix guides. Up at the bivouac early on Friday morning, Stoffer, peering anxiously down from the eyrie where he and his two companions had passed a miserable night, perceived to his astonishment a solitary human figure bounding up the rocks of the Dru, and approaching at a prodigious speed. This was Armand Charlet, who having been absent on an expedition, had arrived at the hut late on the preceding evening,

and was now hastening to the rescue alone, without waiting for the main body of the guides who were following him as fast as they could. In the astonishingly short time of two hours and forty minutes he had reached the three men at the bivouac, and was afterwards joined by the other guides, all of them exhausted by their efforts to overtake him.

Charlet, however, was determined that his party should not only rescue the living, but should fetch down the body of Daurenson. It was probably now his haste that proved his undoing. In hurriedly traversing a narrow ledge with ice on it, he slipped and fell through the air, fortunately on to a small patch of snow, about ten yards below. With brilliant presence of mind the guide, Georges Cachat, was able to hold him with the rope, and save him from destruction, incidentally saving the lives of all the other men on the same rope. Charlet was seriously injured in the head. His wounds had to be bound up, and presently he recovered consciousness. He was then roped between two guides, while another pair took charge of Cachat, whose hand had been damaged by the pressure of the rope when he had so successfully checked Charlet's fall. The whole party of guides, under the capable leadership of Tournier, then began the descent. At the shoulder, an intrepid lady doctor, Madame Manoury, who had come up there in order to help, gave first aid to Charlet, and found that he was suffering from a fractured skull.

As the descent proceeded, Charlet realised that his strength was not likely to last, and he repeatedly urged the men to greater speed. The heroic Clot and his two brave rescuers, who were descending steadily, were caught up and passed. Continually Charlet pleaded for speed and still more speed. The pace, indeed, became so great that some climbers on a neighbouring peak, in ignorance of all that had been happen-

ing, were startled and amazed at the spectacle of a crowd of men apparently diving in headlong flight down the forbidding crags of the Little Dru.

Charlet's presentiment was justified, for, on reaching the glacier, he collapsed, and again became unconscious, so that for the remainder of the terrible journey down the steep mountain-side, and across the Mer-de-glace to the Montenvers, he had to be carried by his devoted colleagues.

Clot, who had lived through three nights of exposure, reached the hut safely with his two courageous companions soon after midday, and arrived at the Montenvers before seven o'clock that night. The next day a party of guides who went up to bring down Daurenson's body considered the conditions to be so unfavourable that they made their way to the bivouac-place by passing over the summit of the Great Dru, so as to deal with the difficulties of the Little Dru more easily by encountering them only during the descent.

Finally, it is remarkable that during the course of this disaster on the Little Dru no less than fifty-one persons took part in the operations that were necessitated by the accident to one climber. The gallantry and unselfishness of so many of the participants in the rescue work is specially striking. Paillard had sacrificed his life in a manner that is beyond all praise. Fortunately Clot and Choisy, as well as the gallant Italian and Swiss parties, were soon none the worse for their magnificent efforts. That dashing guide, Charlet, not only made a complete recovery from his injuries, but subsequently made an equally perfect recovery from further severe injuries which he sustained in another accident later.

It is sad to learn that the heroic Choisy and Clot were involved in the following year in a fatality during a very difficult climb on the Meije, the famous rock-peak in Dauphiny. They were attempting to reach the highest

summit from the north by ascending a precipitous ice-gully, when Clot slipped, and pulled his leader into a fall. Both men were hurled down the gully till Choisy, by being flung into a crevasse, automatically prevented his companion from falling farther. Choisy was killed on the spot, and Clot was seriously hurt. It was characteristic of Clot's intrepidity that in spite of his injuries he insisted on accompanying the search-party that brought down the body of his friend.

‘AS A FLOWER OF THE FIELD’

*Each wayside flower recalls her little face,
Its innocence, its simple friendliness.
The wind-swayed hairbell has her fairy grace,
The violet her half-shy gentleness,
The speedwell lifts her deep blue lovely gaze.*

*But never any more shall those bright eyes
Grow brighter at the magic of the spring
Unless—perhaps—in some far Paradise
They greet the morning, watch the blossoming
Of fadeless flowers ; unfolding mysteries.*

*She was so pretty and so innocent
—A little flower, for her brief lovely day—
One likes to think that her small footsteps went
Up the bright stairs of sunrise, ray by ray,
To other fields sweet with the hawthorn's scent.*

C. M. MALLET.

BY THE WAY.

I COMMENTED in July upon the care with which the Government had refrained from giving a lead of any kind to Parliament in the discussion on the project for altering materially one of the loveliest parts of Dartmoor—a project happily defeated—but that care has been as nothing compared with the care with which it refrained from giving the least indication of its view on the most important legislation affecting the population of this country which has been passed into law for many a session. Everybody can, of course, understand that it is impossible for a Government, as a Government composed of units coalescing for political purposes, to express any corporate view on so controversial a subject as the amendment of the divorce laws of this country, but the Government's abstinence from leadership went far beyond that : members of it indeed voted in one or other of the division lobbies, the law officers gave technical assistance to the Committee of the House of Commons, and the necessary time was rather grudgingly conceded to enable the Bill to become law, but no member of the Government, from first to last, dared to express in debate his personal opinion as to the desirability or undesirability of these profoundly important changes. As Members of Parliament were heard to remark, any observing foreigner would have been impelled to the conclusion from the difference of treatment accorded to the respective Bills that pigs were of much greater concern than human beings.

* * *

The same observing foreigner would have been puzzled

by two other facets of this question. First, that the Bill, though not introduced in his name, was primarily (and justly) regarded as the offspring of one who has not merely come to widespread and well-deserved popularity as a humourist but represents the constituency that is ordinarily thought to be the least favourable to change, particularly change involving religious views and principles, of any in this country. Secondly, that the episcopal bench, to judge—though to judge erroneously—from the speeches, votes, and absences of its occupants—was little interested in, and less concerned with, what in fact has fundamentally modified the relations between Church and State. At no time throughout the five days of discussion in the House of Lords were there more than six occupants, and often there was only one, the uncompromising opponent of the measure, the Bishop of St. Albans.

* * *

Of that well-loved figure a story is told, also in connexion with divorce : when a few years ago he visited the United States he went to address a great ecclesiastical gathering held in the shadow of the noted eminence, Pike's Peak, and he chose with characteristic courage divorce as his subject. As he descended from the train a huge placard met his eye, ' See Pike's Peak and hear Mike speak ! '

* * *

The judgment of Solomon has received continuous applause : applied to the land of Solomon, it has not been so unanimously acclaimed.

* * *

It is time to turn from public affairs : before cricket finally gives way to football let us answer Mr. Bernard Darwin's query, ' Has in fact a real hat ever been given to the performer of the hat-trick ? ' Yes, once at least, within my

own knowledge. Some twenty years ago at a match played in the grounds of Glamis Castle, the Queen's father, Lord Strathmore, captaining the Castle team, was persuaded to put himself on to bowl. Such success greeted his slow leg-breaks that he speedily performed the historic trick and would have done more but for the ineradicable belief held by the visitors' umpire that 'on the line was in.' The Castle team decided to honour the occasion by presenting a Panama hat to their captain and host; several were sent up to Glamis on approval and in due course laid out for inspection and trial. All reference to price being omitted in the hastily despatched order, there was one hat of markedly superior quality among the selection. Oddly enough it was found by Lord Strathmore to be the only one to fit his head. Smiling sheepishly at one another, the guests crowned their captain, and then, apart, honourably 'divvied up.' I hope the hat is still preserved at Glamis.

* * *

The ugliest month in the year has just ended: it is a perverse fate that gives it to so many as the one month in which they can see the countryside.

* * *

Death takes its toll of writers, as of others, without discrimination. It was fortunate that Mary Butts, who died suddenly in the spring in her early forties, had at any rate just completed the story of her childhood at Salterns, the old country house by Poole Harbour, known to all collectors of Blake's pictures, which has now been published under the title of *The Crystal Cabinet* (Methuen, 10s. 6d. n.). Mary Butts, as readers of her historical creations will remember, had no ordinary mind, nor was her childhood ordinary: this is a strange book, leading the reader on with continual

attraction both through the adventures of the writer's material life and through the more unusual adventures of her mind. She had done notable work ; had she lived, she might have done work that was truly distinguished. Her life, like this book, is an unfinished record, and it has its regrets and its appeal accordingly.

★ ★ ★

A second writer who has died, and even more prematurely, is Ernest Lewis, who was only 29 when his pen was laid aside. There will be many who will long recall with pleasure his first two books showing an intimate knowledge and love of dogs ; his last now lies before us, the story of *The Hill Fox* (Constable, 7s. 6d. n.). It has the defect which was noticeable in *Beth : A Sheep Dog*—that of irrelevancy : the author was too deeply interested in naturalist's lore to be desirous of keeping strictly to the biography of any one animal, and accordingly this, like the other, often breaks off to follow some topic which has no bearing on the main one. That is slightly annoying to any who read for the story alone, but it will be readily pardoned by those who have at all the same mind as the author's : here episodes of bird-life are interjected into the story of the fox, but then they are good episodes told with authority and affection ; and the story returns in due course and grows more directly biographical and in consequence more dramatic as it proceeds. It is for comment that Ernest Lewis found it as essential as John Masefield in his *Reynard the Fox* to end his story away from the jaws of the hounds : hunter as he was, his hero could not be given over to violent death at the last—and the book will be a great joy not only to hunters but still more to those who would always wish the hunted to escape. And now 'the hunter is home from the hill' : and the never

numerous band of really good nature-writers is on that account much the poorer.

★ ★ ★

My quotation was written *currente calamo* : it was not until I had set it down that I realised it led me automatically to another book. About R. L. S. there is a still-continuing controversy : to some he is even after these many years as a loved elder brother, a man of mystery and charm, to others he represents in excess the burner of the midnight oil, the over-conscious artist who can never let his pen flow easily, even in the height of his argument or adventure, but must ceaselessly be making obvious search for the polished phrase or the eclectic word. Miss Doris N. Dalglish, in her study *Presbyterian Pirate* (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d. n.), will no doubt interest the holders of both opinions, though it is little likely that either will agree with all of her conclusions. She calls the Life by Sir Graham Balfour 'a prolonged wallow in eulogy,' but she announces not as statements of her opinion but as statements of fact that Stevenson is really a greater novelist than Scott and a greater poet than Burns ; the first on the strength of the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston* and the second in spite of Stevenson's own disclaimer : fantastic as such statements seem and doubtful of immortality as his work to-day is felt to be, Stevenson's character and gifts and achievements were undeniably such as to make him a great figure, and not to men and women of Scotland alone ; and this is a book that will repay study and is deserving of thought, not least for its author's scorn of the novels by which Stevenson is chiefly now remembered—though admittedly written 'with an eye to the true Stevensonian'—a book, that is, of contradictions even as was its subject.

★ ★ ★

As I rather flippantly remarked in his presence a while ago in the course of an after-dinner speech—and if one cannot then be flippant the world is grave indeed—‘every day we become horder and horder’: and yet the remark was no mere flippancy; there are few subjects of importance in our social life to the elucidation of which Lord Horder has not at one time or another made contributions of acumen and authority. He has now collected together under the title *Health and a Day* (Dent, 7s. 6d. n.) twelve of his public addresses, ranging from the general consideration of ‘The Strain of Modern Civilisation’ to special examination of ‘Direct Action in Medicine.’ Ten have been delivered to learned and professional bodies, three in the United States, and the remaining two are reprints of speeches in the House of Lords, the first Lord Horder’s maiden speech on ‘The Nation’s Physique,’ the second on ‘Euthanasia.’ Lord Horder has a way of interpreting his profession to the layman and of dealing with medical matters in their broad aspect which will make many glad to have these addresses in a permanent and compact form. Now that Lord Moynihan has gone from us, he remains with Lord Dawson of Penn the public representative of medicine, and worthily he upholds his part.

★ ★ ★

And, finally, to anyone who would like to enjoy a hearty laugh on holiday, I can cordially commend *Oriental Spotlight* (Murray, 5s. n.), the work of two impudent people who call themselves Rameses and Roly: Rameses writes, Roly draws, and the wit of both has so annoyed the Egyptians that the book is now banned by the Egyptian Government, the members of which do not consider themselves or their fellows fit subjects for jest. Rameses and Roly do, and give a rich variety of reasons.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 167.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach the Editor by 25th September.

'As year by year the labourer ——
His wonted ——, or lops the glades ;
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.'

1. 'Match'd with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A —— wherein we feel there is some hidden want.
2. 'They reckon —— who leave me out ;
When they fly, I am the wings ;
I am the doubter and the doubt,'
3. 'Yes : in the sea of —— enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown.'
4. 'And pain has exhausted every —— —
The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him.'
5. 'Where my Julia's lips do —— ;
There's the land, or cherry-isle,'

Answer to Acrostic 165, July number : 'Spring wakens too ; and my regret Becomes an April violet' (Tennyson : 'In Memoriam'). 1. Sun-floweR (Tennyson : 'In Memoriam'). 2. PraisE (Browning : 'Home Thoughts from the Sea'). 3. RisinG (Tennyson : 'Maud'). 4. (W)InteR (Shakespeare : 'As You Like It'). 5. NameE (Keats : 'Song of the Indian Maiden'). 6. GluT (Keats : 'Ode on Melancholy').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss J. N. McNeill, Charlotte Street, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, and G. S. Madan, Garrick Club, W.C.2, who are invited to choose books, as mentioned above. N.B.—Sources need not be given.

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER 1937.

1914
OCTOBER.

LETTERS BY

BRIG.-GEN. H. F. E. AND LADY EDWINA LEWIN.

[This continues and concludes the series of letters published in the August and September numbers of CORNHILL.]

At the date of writing Brig.-General Lewin was Major Commanding the 16th Battery of XLI Brigade R.F.A. 'Old Rooks,' that is the 16th Field Battery, so called because it was raised in 'the Rookery Walk' of Woolwich Arsenal in 1795. Lady Edwina was staying at Englemere, Ascot, with her father, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts.

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Some of the statements and views may be inaccurate. In the light of subsequent events and information this is to be expected, but it must be remembered that they express merely the facts and views as they presented themselves to the writer on the date when they were written.]

Englemere, Ascot.

Thursday, 1st October, 1914.

Your letters of 27th to 29th have just come, and I am so thrilled by your description of the wireless shooting of the big guns. How splendid! I suppose we must have this for all our Artillery work. How amusing to think of you adopting a dog!—do bring it home. I am so glad you had a service on Sunday, and feel that the men must have liked it, even if the singing was a bit too high!

Yesterday our hospital in the five-shilling stand was solemnly opened by Father, and to-day 18 men arrived, among them two gunners and two of the 60th. They are not bad cases, they have not given us any bad cases, so that we may get the nurses and arrangements into working order, and then we feel we can take on anything. The Grand Stand makes such a nice place, and Colonel Carter has been splendid, and they have got baths, hot-air heating all through, and besides the wards a very nice recreation-room. Aileen is very busy up there. I am going to help her with the accounts.—Don't laugh! Ascot is really very busy, for there are over thirty Belgians to be provided for. I want to go and see them, but have been so busy.

I know you are right about keeping up the Divisions to full strength and not trying to send out new ones. As I told you, Lord K. promised Father this should be done, as the Little Man told him he could not possibly collect new divisions, having no R.A.M.C., no R.A.S.C., none of the essentials. Lord K. sees this.

Lord Curzon came to luncheon to-day. He has been going round the country speaking for National Service, for, as he says, if we just pull through, the many foolish people in this country may still jib at compulsion. Father is getting letters from Liberals and Pacifists all over the world who were dead against him, and who now say they mean to see to it that we are never caught in this way again.

Aisne.

Thursday, 1st Oct.

A day of peerless beauty. We are still in reserve, so we only loaf about and make jobs for ourselves. Yesterday I went over and saw Johnny (Gough) and had a very satisfactory talk with him. He sent me to reconnoitre a bit for

him, and I sent him in my report with a sketch this morning. I like him very much, he gives one such confidence. He told me his young cousin in Godfrey's battery had been killed, but that Godfrey was going on well and hoped to be back soon.

The aeroplane with wireless has been so successful that we seem to be besting the 'Alleymands,' as the men call them, at their own game, which is satisfactory. It only shows how many more aeroplanes we want. At present we seem to have only one to be shared by two corps or more.

By the way, I see the Little Chief has appealed for saddles from sportsmen. Let him have all mine at once, they are in good condition. There is also the new military one he gave me, you can take that too. Father sent me the *Observer* the other day. It got to me in six days. Letters at the quickest take twelve days by the ordinary post, so newspapers evidently take precedence over letters. Garvin is splendid at these times. I enjoy him enormously.

I find being in reserve one has time for daily washing and shaving, so I am getting through both my washing and shaving soaps at an alarming rate; please send me some more.

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 2nd October, 1914.

Father is making me copy two bits out of your letter, the one about the way the Japs kept their Divisions up to strength—it is for Lord K.—and the other one about wireless from aeroplanes for Artillery co-operation. No one will know you wrote them. I am so sorry to see General Freddy Wing is wounded, and both the Sherstons in the Rifle Brigade. Did I tell you Father got a telegram from the Army in France on his birthday?

Aisne.

Friday, 2nd October, 1914.

Ronnie¹ and the lads are actually playing a hand of Bridge while we are waiting for dinner as I sit and write. We can only afford one candle, so we have to huddle closely round it. After dinner Ronnie and I move into a minute room opening off our dining-room, and the lads spread straw mattresses on the dining-room floor. Ronnie and I have our valises on top of the straw mattresses, and we slip into flea-bags—we actually get out of some of our clothes these nights—and how we do sleep ! Up at five—it is barely light—stables, breakfast at 6.30, lunch at one, dinner at half-past seven, bed almost at once after it is over. Such we do in reserve. I find it hard to find jobs for everyone to keep them happy and employed. I think a football will be useful to us when the winter comes on, it is easily carried and will keep the men cheery and warm on off days. So will you please send out one football, two bladders and one inflator.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 3rd October.

I have such a strong feeling that things are going well for us on our left but for some reason are being kept dark. God grant this may be true. All we have been told is that the French are fighting grandly under General de Castelnau. The German papers for the first time are publishing stories more near the truth than they have ever done before. That seems to be a good sign. Your letters are so interesting, I read and re-read them till I know them by heart ; it is like talking to you. A lovely day of sunshine and soft Irish air, and I wonder if it is fine with you.

The Russians seem to be moving now like some huge

¹ *My Captain, now Brigadier C. R. B. Carrington, D.S.O.*

giant. I always hope for a revolution of Socialists in Germany when they are told the truth of how things are going.

A brother of Joseph's¹ is here. He was on board the *Hogue* when she was torpedoed, and gave us a great description of his four hours in the water. He is amazingly stolid and took the whole affair in the most matter-of-fact way. It must have been quite awful.

Jean Furse and Mrs. 'Longjob' are coming for Sunday. We are such a hen party, and I feel a bit more of the man element would be so good for us. I wonder if it is the same with men, or if it all seems quite natural to you to be away without us. The azaleas have turned brilliant colours and are lovely, and so are the trees, but one has a dead feeling of not knowing what time of year it is. It just feels as if there had always been a state of war, and I cannot believe you have not been gone two months yet. It might be years.

Aisne.

Saturday, 3rd.

No time to write to-day. We are just off to take up a position further on our left. I fancy it is only a temporary stop-gap measure, so all news must wait till to-morrow. Corporal Bassford was killed at Mons. He must have been about the first man killed in the war. All well in the Battery. Lowe has got his commission.

Later. I got orders to report myself at 9 a.m. at Brenelle to General Horne. There was dense fog, which made movement across country difficult. Gerald came with me. We were told that we would have to move to position on the heights south of Presles, almost the identical spot I had selected when Johnny Gough sent me to reconnoitre on the

¹ Joseph Macdonald, late Rifle Brigade, valet to Lord Roberts.

first day of the battle. We went over to the place and found Wardie ¹ occupying the position. He is to turn out to-night, and we go in. I decided to advance one section on the heights overlooking Presles, the rest of the battery withdrawn into a hollow nearly a mile in rear. This will enable me to bring as much fire as possible into the Ostel valley. Sam will look after the detached section, Ronnie will keep the waggon lines far in rear out of harm's way near Monthussard farm. His job will be no light one as he has to arrange to supply the three detachments into which the battery is split up (Head-quarters, detached section, and four guns in the hollow) with water, supplies, and ammunition, and there is no road to any one of our positions.

Englemere, Ascot.

Sunday, 4th October, 1914.

How sad it is about Arthur Green. I know how you will feel it, and am so unhappy for you and dear old Aunt Fan and his poor wife. One cannot bear to think of her pain. They say he was doing so splendidly, it is very tragic.

The rest of the party have gone off to chapel at Wellington, and as it is a delicious day I am sitting in the verandah reading the service, and wondering if you held one in the battery.

You cannot think how nice the hospital is. You cannot think how kind people are about giving us things, and doing everything in their power to help the hospital. The butcher is giving meat and fish free for a month and ice for the whole time. The baker is giving bread free for a month, and any number in the village are knitting socks, scarves and mittens for me to send out to France. Mog and Joan ² have each purchased you a tin of sardines, over which they are very excited.

¹ Now Major-General H. D. O. Ward, C.B., C.M.G.

² Two small nieces, Margaret and Joan.

Aisne.

Sunday, 4th.

We got into position after dark last night. We did fairly well all things considered, and were finished and able to bed down by midnight. Ronnie, however, with the horses, did not get back to his spot till much later.

Englemere, Ascot.

Monday, 5th October, 1914.

I have just heard that the re-mounts have bought 'Preston' for what we gave for him. One of the men in the hospital, a gunner, told me he knew you and last saw you at St. Quentin when he was wounded and you had seen he was made comfortable. Isn't it queer he should have come here !

Aisne.

Monday, 5th.

Accurate observation is by no means easy. Anne went over with two signallers and telephones to the Guards trenches to try and get close and definite observations from there. He was fairly successful as he could see the enemy in trenches and got fire to bear on them.

Englemere, Ascot.

Tuesday, 6th October, 1914.

Your letter of the 2nd came yesterday after I had finished writing. I love to think of you with a sprig of rosemary. So true how scents bring a scene or person back, and whenever I go through the garden past the rosemary bushes you are with me.

Yesterday Father and Ailcen went over to Brocket for the night and to-day they wandered about seeing various territorial battalions which are in training in the neighbour-

hood. They went in a beautiful Rolls-Royce which a young Canadian has put at Father's disposal to take him about to see the Colonial troops when they arrive. He is quite a nice young man, and I am trying to persuade him to fit an anti-air gun on his car and be off to shoot German 'planes.

Englemere, Ascot.

Wednesday, 7th October.

There seems no news to-day, except that the French and our Cavalry seem to have done a raid away on our left. Hubert Gough, I suppose, as he wrote and said he was going there. Yesterday the Duchess Vendôme came to see the hospital, she is the King of the Belgians sister. Such a charming woman, but miserable, of course, about her country and very anxious. Godfrey Gillson is going back next week, and we are trying to persuade them to come to dine and sleep before he goes. I do hope they will. Such a brave letter from Aunt Fan this morning. She says Arthur was buried in the cemetery. What is the name of the place? They don't seem to know. I will get the football, etc., and send them out by the first messenger I can catch. I hear Leo Amery has gone to join Rawly. His brother,¹ I am glad to see, is rapidly recovering. I gave the Little Man (Lord Roberts) your message. Of course he understands about your having written late for his birthday. How can one remember everything!

Aisne.

Wednesday, 7th October, 1914.

I have been running about so much for the past few days I have had no time to sit down and write, but now,

¹ Major Harold Amery, the Black Watch, severely wounded on the Aisne. Died November, 1915, as result of further wounds received in action at Ypres.

having dined in our cave with Sam and '2nd Lieut. Lowe' (beefsteak, bread and jam), I must begin to tell you of our doings by the light of our candle stuck in a niche. I have been trying to improve our co-operation with the infantry over the river. When I last wrote we were just going into this position from the reserve. My diagram to the Little Chief will have shown you the rough idea of things. I have Anne forward in the infantry trenches and I go up there myself to observe—to the very safe parts) and we signal back to the observing station how our fire is doing. It is good fun and I think we are making ourselves thoroughly obnoxious to the Germans. The observing station is in the most beautiful sylvan glade you have ever seen, with four caves hewn in the rock among the trees, and we live in these, nine of us in all, myself, Sam, Lowe, Theaker, Cooke, Johnny and 3 more.¹ During the night we each take spells of duty as look-out to watch for the infantry's signal lamp if they want us to fire over their heads in the case of attack. I enclose you a rough sketch taken from this spot, and a report which I sent in to Johnny Gough which will help you. The nights are fine and pleasant, and I enjoy my spell of watching.

Englemere, Ascot.

Thursday, 8th October, 1914.

Your letter to Mother arrived last night. Father had a long letter about future plans. I would give anything to be able to discuss it with you, but one must not even write a word, which is maddening. The Little Man says it is all satisfactory and on sound lines. I know you will approve, but I could not wait to ask your leave, we have

¹ *The Officers, N.C.O.'s and men forming Battery Headquarters—the range-takers, signallers, ground-scouts and look-out men, etc.*

taken the body right off the Ford and Dowley and Fitch are making it into an ambulance to take two men lying down. We have to fetch all the cases from Aldershot and have nothing to bring the worst ones in. The body will go on again at the end of the war and be none the worse. Antwerp makes one feel very anxious. If only they can hold out another two weeks or so, but I fear it will be a hard struggle. We have let the Exeter house to the Officers of the 4th Wessex Artillery.¹ They won't take on the garden, however, but I think we have done quite well. Mrs. Harmer has arrived over from Ireland, and I have installed her in her new rooms. Ted met her at the station and took her to the new house. I must go and see her.

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 9th.

How I long to discuss the situation with you, and talk about all that you are doing. The Gillsons were coming to-day, but she has a bad headache so they have put it off till Monday. He told me on the telephone how near you two were once, just in the next field, and that you gave him such a useful hint about his limbers. I must hear all about it on Monday.

Yesterday the Duc D'Orléans came to tea. He is very miserable at not being allowed to fight for France, and it must be awful to know all your fellow countrymen are fighting and to be debarred. He wants Father to get him a job in our Red Cross or some work of that kind. The Canadians arrive next week and are to be on Salisbury Plain at first. Three of their officers who came on ahead to arrange camps came to tea. They seem very keen, but do not

¹ *XLI Brigade R.F.A. were under orders to move to Exeter when war broke out. In anticipation of this, we had signed the lease of a house there,*

appear quite to have grasped what we are in for in this war. The civilian mind finds it hard to grasp. Colonel Browning is wanting to bring the National Service League to an end. He says their salary bill alone is colossal and money is bound to be scarce. He says that if the country isn't aware now of what is wanted no amount of League preaching will make it. He may be right, but I am convinced Lord K. could get compulsion now at once if he chose. I wonder so where you are and what you are doing.

Aisne.

Friday, 9th.

I am glad to say that we have now established a more or less universal system of Artillery observation up the Ostel valley on the lines I had suggested. It is gratifying to feel that we are getting on. One has really quite a lot to be thankful for, first the glorious weather and then one's wonderful health. I have never been so well and we are all always hungry, and eat and drink anything that comes along—black tea at every meal, often four times a day, and never a hint of indigestion ! I am trying to cut down the weight of things one has to carry, and I am sure I can do so in the matter of a revolver. My Government one seems to weigh a ton. Moreover, it won't go into the pocket of my great-coat, the most suitable place to have it when wearing that garment. Could you get some military expert to get me a suitable and handy small pistol of sorts which will answer these considerations ? If it takes Government ammunition 'tant mieux,' but if not it doesn't matter. I want to give Lowe a present on his promotion, and I do not think I can do better than give him a waterproof coat like the one you sent me. I tried on to-day the waterproof trousers you sent me and think they will be invaluable on a wet day.

If you could also send me a few stout and large envelopes I could then enclose letters home for the lads. I do not like asking Hugh to take letters from everyone to burden the King's Messenger, but a single envelope is a different matter.

This evening I went over to the Irish Guards' trenches, shown on my panorama sketch, and in passing through the poor little bombarded town of Vailly I met Robert Ferguson. He was out foraging for victuals and seemed very fit and well. He sent you all sorts of messages. I heard from Hereward a few days ago, offering me an overcoat the Little Chief had sent him, saying he had not the face to wear such a garment when others might want it more than he, who slept in a house always. It was very nice of him sending it, but I have replied I could not possibly carry such a thing, the weight is prohibitive, so he must keep it. By the way, the coat which the Little Chief was sending me with the expanding skirt has never fetched up yet. I rather hope it won't, for I do not know how I should carry it. The Irish Guards were all very well and cheerful. I saw Lord Ardee, John Trefusis, Francis Scott—lent to them from the Grenadiers. They had a good story of a sergeant reporting he had shot at, and wounded, a German in the wood in front of their trenches. 'How do you know you wounded him?'—'Sure, by the roar he let out of him!' Good night now. I will think of you to-night between 2 and 3 a.m. I am on look-out then. It is a beautiful still night so far, and no firing on either side.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 10th.

It looks as if Antwerp must go. It is crushing for the poor Belgians. Then I suppose the Germans will have a flying post there, and will try to send a Zeppelin over to see

us. In some ways it would do a world of good to raise public opinion, but I am so afraid that only St. Paul's or some other beautiful place or ancient building would be hurt and the people who have landed us in all this trouble go unharmed. 'Save us from civilians' should be added to our prayers! I send you a list of officers all now known to be safe, but formerly mostly reported killed or missing. London is practically in darkness at night now, and it seems so odd.

Aisne.

Saturday, 10th.

The *Observer* of the 4th arrived last night, and after reading Garvin's vivid and stirring paragraphs it occurred to me it would give you quite an erroneous impression of the danger in which we all live. As a matter of fact this so-called 'battle' is now nothing more than a siege. The first three days were hard fighting and the poor infantry suffered badly. Then they dug themselves in. The one or two batteries who were in positions where they were slated were got out at night, and we have now all concealed and dug ourselves in, so that although there is bombardment each day the damage done is really practically nil and one learns that it certainly takes a man's weight in lead to be fired before you can kill him. The weather has been heavenly for the past few days, and living in our cave in the wood and spending the daylight in our sylvan bower firing occasionally at German batteries when they fire, and whose positions we think we have spotted, is a delightful picnic which you could have shared perfectly with me without danger. I do not know why we have drifted into this sort of siege. At first we had to do it in order to hold on, but I believe—and the regimental infantry officers to whom I

have talked agree with me—that at any time these past ten days we—i.e. the British forces—could have butted through the Germans on our front and cleared them off the position they hold. I suppose we are wrong and the powers that be know better, but somehow we have a kind of dread we have not lately been pulling our pound weight. This evening I dashed over to Soupîr to see dear old Arthur Green's grave. Brabazon (Irish Guards) showed me where it was in the little cemetery, and I enclose a sketch for Aunt Fan. Please send it on to her with my love. Poor old boy, it was his extreme keenness to try and make out the very difficult piece of ground his brigade were called upon to defend which led to his end. He told me when I had tea with him it was most broken difficult country, and he must get the hang of it into his head. He was reconnoitring, peering about doing this up in the trenches when a sniper shot him.

The climbing irons have not reached me, but please do not bother, I have already cajoled two pairs out of the sappers, so we are well provided.

I was thinking afterwards that it was not very noble-spirited of me the other day to have girded at the lot of the professional soldier, because this war meant more sacrifice to him and his belongings than to the majority of stay-at-home English people. We must realise that we are honoured above all such, by being charged this super tax, for are we not descendants of the men who won us Agincourt and Crécy, who were tortured and died resisting Spain in the days of Elizabeth, and who, after many years of sea-saw warfare, finally broke the power of Napoleon. We have reaped the comfort and ease which the tears and grief of those men and women won for us, and shall we do less honour, giving our children and grandchildren the same good

heritage that has been ours? The poor weak flesh is hard to conquer and keep in subjection at times.

Englemere, Ascot.

Sunday, 11th.

Father met the Russian Ambassador the other day and he said how humiliated Russia had felt at the time when Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Germany held a pistol at her head and she could do nothing. From that day they have been prepared for this war and nothing would now stop them until Germany was crushed. The *Observer* announces that the King of Roumania is dead. I wonder if this means they will join in with the Allies. Father tells me the new man, a nephew, is very sympathetic to us and his wife is the daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh. Italy, if rumour is true, has at last got equipped and is providing her troops with winter garments.

Aisne.

Sunday, 11th.

I have been all to-day over in the trenches of 3rd Coldstream, directing my fire from there. No targets for us—we could only search woods, hollows and likely spots where Germans might be. It was a lovely day and I met many old Khartoum friends. They gave me an excellent luncheon. Things seem a bit against us at the moment, or perhaps it is I feel like this because I hear Antwerp has fallen and we have no news of the victory we were promised a week ago in East Prussia and Silesia. However, no news is probably good news, and it is my fatal habit of going to meet trouble which promotes these fears. In our present position we are out of the way of seeing Hugh, so hear nothing.

Englemere, Ascot.

Monday, 12th.

The Gillsons are down here and we have all completely lost our hearts to them. He is wonderfully well and going before a board to-morrow, and hopes to get out at once, but fears he may have to wait a bit and train Kitchener's army. He tells me your plan of the observation screen is being adopted by everyone, he thinks.

Aisne.

Monday, 12th.

Received orders to withdraw at dusk from our position, our place being taken by French troops. The French artillery officers who came up during the afternoon to inspect our gun positions, etc., were very civil and nice about our arrangements. At dusk Ronnie brought up the limbers and teams from the farm at Crévecœur, and we marched back, guns and wagons and the various detachments all assembling there, and we are about to march now, 9 p.m., for Oulchy-la-Ville, 23 miles distant.

Englemere, Ascot.

Tuesday, 13th.

I was so weary last night that I fell asleep writing to you, and now your letter of the 7th has arrived this morning. I hear your Division has nearly joined up with the rest of our army, so we hope any day now to hear of the German right wing being rolled up. We spent a very peaceful Sunday. Father, Aileen and I went to the second service, and in the evening Aileen and I went up to the hospital and the Rector gave us a charming little service which the men seemed to enjoy. Yesterday Father went to London and Colonel Repington lunched with him. Apparently it was

the Admiralty that put the Marines into Antwerp—a bad move. They all seemed half-trained naval reserves, could do nothing, and we have lost 2,000 interned in Holland. Colonel Repington said Lord K. had meant to send the 7th Division also to Antwerp, but luckily this fell through as our northward move had begun. Father is very interested in your letter to him and will try to see the Master-General. He thinks some rather false ideas have drifted back to this side of what artillery really want. I do so agree about the new army being the King's army, not Kitchener's, and find this morning Major Gillson was very strong on the subject. They are both such dears and I love their friendliness. I am afraid you will miss Sergeant-Major Lowe¹ dreadfully, and do hope he will not leave you even though he has got his commission.

Oulchy-la-Ville.

Tuesday, 13th.

We got in here at 5.30 a.m. this morning, a cold long march, but luckily a half-moon to help us. We bivouacked in a field till 1 p.m. and then moved on to Neuilly-St. Front to entrain at 3 p.m., and are due to leave at 6.55 p.m. via Paris and Amiens.²

Englemere, Ascot.

Wednesday, 14th.

Nothing fresh seems to have happened, but we hear that the 1st Corps is not up yet, but being hurried along, so I keep picturing you on your way to join in the fray. Father hears that General Lindsay is writing a strong report home to say that all batteries must be supplied with Stevens Tele-

¹ The late Captain F. Lowe. Then my Battery-Sergt.-Major.

² Thus began 'the race to the Sea,' which ended in the first battle of Ypres, and the years of trench warfare.

phones¹ and that more observation balloons are wanted. Freddy Mercer (the late Major-General Sir Frederick Mercer) is coming home as C.R.A. of the Indian Corps. Cyril² writes that the *Drake* has gone off somewhere to cold regions, has been filled up with warm clothes, and may be away some time. I feel the next ten days are going to be very full of big things and much fighting for you all, and that all our prayers will be needed for you.

Wednesday, 14th.

We are moving north by train, where to I don't know exactly, the Little Chief will let you know, but there is the chance of sending you these letters, for we have been joined by an officer of the Indian Army going up to join G.H.Q. and I will send them on to Hugh by him. Tell everyone I think gloves will be the first need of the men. Socks have been issued plentifully from stores but no gloves.

If you ever are writing to or seeing Mr. Kipling please tell him how his lines 'For all we have and are' have heartened us. One feels so exactly their truth. He says 'Our world has passed away in wantonness o'erthrown,' and our happy little worlds have been ruined by 'Guillaume,' as the French call him. However, 'In courage keep your heart.'

We stopped at Etaples just now and I met Phil Woodroffe, who is D.A.Q.M.G. on the staff of General 'Wully' Robertson,³ for whom he has the greatest admiration. He was very optimistic and says he still believes the war will be a short one. I trust he is right. My own feeling is that

¹ The telephones supplied privately by Lord Roberts at outbreak of war to several batteries.

² Commander H. C. R. Brocklebank, R.N., my brother-in-law then serving in H.M.S. 'Drake.'

³ Later Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson, Bart., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.S.O., then Quartermaster-General, B.E.F.

German opinion is firmly behind the Emperor and they believe as firmly in the rightness of their cause as we do in ours, and when people are of this mind you cannot conquer them until they are crushed to powder, and you do not crush mountains like the German Empire in a night.

We are to detrain at a place called Hazebrouck, about 36 miles from Calais. They will almost hear our guns at Dover. It is delightful seeing the sea again. Somehow it seems to put strength into one and makes you feel you are in touch with our own element. Everyone in the Brigade very flourishing. With Antwerp now in the hands of the Germans it more than ever makes us pray that the Navy be given a victory when the German fleet puts to sea, as it surely will have to some day.

Englemere, Ascot.

Thursday, 15th.

I seem to have written all day, and not a line to you, and so now I am lying down and going to have a chat. First I want to know if I have ordered enough foodstuffs, so tell me when it begins to arrive. Neville (Colonel Sir Neville Chamberlain) appeared for luncheon to-day. He is over from Dublin for a few nights. Things seem quiet, but I think he is longing to be back again in the army. By to-morrow I suppose you will have joined up with the rest of the forces. We hear that a German wireless was intercepted from their right begging for more ammunition as they were so short. How I hope this is true, and we may really do a big thing this time, and crush them right back. I suppose we must expect them to stand again and again, but a big defeat now must shake them all. How one prays for it.

Father got news from the American Embassy that little Padre O'Rorke is well and in a fortress somewhere on the

Elbe. Mrs. O'Rorke is so happy at hearing of him. Now we are trying to get news of George Morris.¹ I hear Rawly is delighted with his 7th Division, and has got Colonel Byng's Cavalry as well. In time, I suppose, he will have the 8th Division also, but that is not ready yet.

Cinque Rues, near Walloon-Cappel.

Thursday, 15th.

We arrived at Hazebrouck yesterday at 6 p.m. and began detraining at 7.15. Very bad arrangements and no railway staff to speak of. We are resting to-day in a delightful farm where the people are making us very comfortable, although having us billeted on them must be an awful nuisance. The husband is away fighting and there is not a smile on his poor wife's face, even though she has a jolly little six-months-old baby. They have plenty of milk and butter—such luxury—and last night I actually slept in a bed, a thing I have not done since we left Grand Verly on the first advance in August! How I did sleep!

Later. A sad blow. I had ordered a bath for six o'clock and went shopping with Ronnie in the village; came back to tea promising myself such a tub at six, and somehow something had gone wrong and Johnny had not got it ready. I cursed him soundly and went out into the yard of the farm and found the men in the barn singing songs. One man sang especially well and they were singing Loch Lomond. The farm people were listening and I called for Killarney, which was very well taken up and applauded. Before it was finished Johnny came to tell me my bath was ready and I had the best tub in the world. I am off again now for another sleep in my delightful bed.

¹ *Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. George Morris, Irish Guards, died of wounds received at Villers Cotterêts.*

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 16th.

A lovely morning after a good deal of rain. It all smells so clean and washed and I want you badly to share it all with me—the lovely colours of the azaleas and maples, which have turned gloriously.

Cinque Rues.

Friday, 16th.

Shopped yesterday in Hazebrouck, though it was an odd mixture of peace and war, such as you must have often seen in South Africa. It is a country town of considerable size with good shops, most of which are open, a large 'Place' in the centre. The place has been less affected by the war than most towns we have seen lately, the Germans never really got here. The 'Place' was full of parked guns and motor-lorries, blacksmiths shoeing horses, crowds of refugees from Lille standing about idle, looking on, the townspeople very polite and eager to help one. I hope we do not have to leave them in the lurch as we did at Mons, Soissons and other places. It seems so hard, they see great armies about them and feel safe, and then suddenly we go and the devouring German descends upon them. As we wandered about in the streets we met men from all regiments of the army that one had not seen for ages. All the time one heard the distant boom of guns, for Rawly, Smith-D., and Pulteney are fighting quite near here, and I suppose we shall join them as soon as the whole corps arrives. Ronnie and I wandered about buying materials to make a roof for our mess-cart, a two-wheeled country cart which we have bought and which will be much improved by a roof. We got what we wanted and returned home carrying the stuff in front of us on our horses, much to the amusement of the

smart little ladies promenading the town to see the sights and at times looking somewhat scared when the sound of the guns grew clearer than usual.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 17th.

'The Little Man' is going to London early so will take this for the War Office Bag for me. He is also lunching with Mr. Asquith, and hopes to take the opportunity to point out the serious responsibility the Cabinet incurred in having put those few Marines and untrained Naval Reserve boys into Antwerp, and to point out the danger of the Government interfering with strategy on the Continent. I had a despairing letter from Phil,¹ saying that his Regiment is stuck on the frontier and there seems no chance of his getting to France.

Steenvoorde.

Saturday, 17th.

We marched at 8 a.m. this morning, joining the rest of the Brigade as it passed our farm, and have taken over a billet in a comfortable farm on the north side of the town of Steenvoorde.

Englemere, Ascot.

Sunday, 18th.

Sunday again, and you have been so in my thoughts all day, for I know how sad you will be about Captain Grayson being killed. He wrote me such a cheery letter, so glad to go and so happy at being back once more with his beloved gunners. I always had a hope you might meet, for his letter about you was so charming. Our sailor men have done great things in sending four destroyers off the Dutch coast, and we were victorious, which will put heart into everyone. We hear there is good news from the left wing and I long

¹ Now Lieut.-Colonel Philip Gaisford, Indian Political Department.

to know what it is and where you are. I will ask Major Gillson to choose a small revolver for you ; he will know just what you want.

You cannot think how nice the little Ford is as an ambulance. Fitch and Dowley have done the whole thing and done it really well. Now we are quite independent and can fetch all sorts of cases from Aldershot.

Colonel John Ponsonby¹ came to tea yesterday. He is staying with his mother down here and seems quite healed, though still very lame. He told me he had seen you one day and that you did look so well. The P.M. has asked Father to go on the Defence Committee again, which is amusing after their joy at being rid of him before.

Steenvoorde.

Sunday, 18th.

We moved 12 miles further north yesterday to make room for the 1st Division, which is following us up from the south. We shall thus be concentrated and shall hope to make great progress. Yesterday two of the 'habitants' who had come—one from Boulogne and the other from Calais—assured us that British troops were pouring in at these places. The man from Calais said he had seen 70,000 British troops that day ! I trust he is correct, for they will come in useful to us ! It is lovely and mild this morning and the sun has come through the clouds which have lowered over us the past few days. The Colonel held a parade service in a field near us. The R.C. party went to the village church and the organist played 'God save the King' twice during the service.

Otto Lund² is doing most awfully well at Brigade Head-

¹ Now Major-General Sir John Ponsonby, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

² Brigade orderly officer, now Lieut.-Colonel O. M. Lund, D.S.O., Royal Artillery.

quarters. I don't know how they would get on without him. Please thank the Little Chief for sending me a copy of his article in the *Hibbert Journal*. I hope people will now listen, believe, and do what he tells them. How exactly all he foretold is coming to pass ! I only hope the country may be spared a raid, for these Germans are too loathsome in their bestiality—I cannot call it anything else—when they settle in a country. I wish some of our Pacifists could have some Germans billeted on them for a fortnight—what a tonic it would be for them !

Englemere, Ascot.

Monday, 19th.

Sir John's dispatch (Sir John French) is thrilling reading. One feels very proud of the fighting powers of our men. I must cut it all out for you. To-day we have been so cheered by hearing you have driven the Germans back over thirty miles. It must have been a big thing and one just longs for details. It sounds as though you had had hard marching. I do pray all is again well with you and the battery. I heard this morning from Phil (Gaisford), wildly excited as he had just got orders to start, though he did not know where to. A number of Indian troops are being sent to East Africa. I must try and find out from the India Office where the boy has gone and do hope he will get through safe.

We were told this afternoon to prepare thirty-four beds for to-morrow, so you may imagine the excitement in the hospital. It will be all but full now, a good test of how we can work !

Steenvoorde.

Monday, 19th.

We have not moved yet and so far, 9 p.m., no indication. If we get no orders by to-morrow morning I shall ride into

Headquarters and get some pay for the men, and hope to get this passed on to Hugh. An irate order has appeared to-day saying that letters have been arriving in England by 'unauthorised means' and this must at once stop. The reply is to ginger up the 'authorised means' and get the troops' letters home in something under three weeks. I have to-day had my hair cut entirely 'en brosse' by Bombardier Mercer. I wish you could see me, I look a veritable gaol-bird !

Rawly is greatly welcomed out here and seems to be doing very well ; he commands the confidence of men. A mail has just arrived with your letters of 5th, 8th and 17th, and how the latter has come so quickly I cannot imagine. Bless you and thank you for them.

Englemere, Ascot.

Tuesday, 20th.

We hear that General Morland is succeeding General Fergusson, and Colin Mackenzie has got Hubert Hamilton's Division. The Indian troops will be with you this week ; I am so glad, for it all means more help and, I pray, a speedier end to the war. Wild excitement in the hospital to-day, 34 men have been sent in, one a Curraghmore man, isn't that odd ! Susie (Lady Susan Dawnay) is here for luncheon. She is now working morning and evening in the Windsor hospital and comes over with the most gruesome details of operations, over which I tell her she just gloats.

Wielteje.

Tuesday, 20th.

We received orders at 2.30 a.m. to march at 4 a.m. to join the 4th Guards Brigade at Boeschepe, about seven miles east of Steenvoorde. They form the Advanced Guard of the 2nd Division with the 1st Division away on our left. When

we joined up we moved via Vlamertinghe and Ypres to St. Julien, where we had a long halt about 1 p.m. in dull drizzling weather. While I was reconnoitring forward for positions to the north-east of Wieltje, Anne foraged through St. Julien and arrived back with a fine plump chicken and a large bottle of red wine. At 3.30 we got orders to move into billets about Wieltje and we put ourselves into a farm. All this time there was a certain amount of gunfire on our right towards Zonnebeke, and just as we had off-saddled this increased to rifle fire and we got orders to turn out at once for support of 4th Guards Brigade who had moved out. As we arrived in St. Julien it was just falling dusk and I met Tich,¹ and all the élite of the Army Corps and Division. Tich, as usual, was quite unperturbed and thought nothing of the matter, and soon got us sent back to our billets—in pitch darkness and drizzle.

Englemere, Ascot. Trafalgar Day.

Wednesday, 21st.

It is wonderful to think that on Trafalgar Day long ago the 'Rooks' were fighting with Lord Nelson, and now you have them at it again, and it is curious that to-day the Navy has joined in with us and is shelling the Germans from the sea.* I feel this is all a very good omen and that we are going to have a very great victory.

* *Note.*—The 16th Battery in 1805 was serving in the West Indies when Lord Nelson's fleet, searching for Villeneuve, arrived out there. The fleet was short of seamen-gunners and Lord Nelson applied for detachments of Artillery to be embarked to make up the deficiency. Three officers and 135 other ranks were embarked on board the 'Victory' and served in her during the search through the West Indies. When Lord Nelson discovered

¹ The late Major F. M. Chevenix-Trench, Brigade-Major 2nd Division Artillery, killed in action 31st October, 1914.

that Villeneuve had sailed back to Europe and was about to leave in pursuit, the General Officer commanding in the West Indies demanded that the embarked Artillery should be returned to his command. This was done. It is incorrect, therefore, to say that the 16th Battery fought at Trafalgar, but it was always the legend in the canteen that it had done so, and a White Ensign was frequently displayed in the gun park of the battery to commemorate its service with the Navy under Lord Nelson.

Wednesday, 21st.

We continued our advance at 5 a.m. to march to Passchendale, and came into action south of the St. Julien-Zonnebeke Road.

Englemere, Ascot.

Thursday, 22nd.

I fell asleep over my letter last night. We went to quite a good concert yesterday afternoon, got up by the Belgian refugees. A Belgian woman fiddled delightfully and several people sang, including Mr. Gervase Elwes, whom I had never heard before. I simply loved his voice and his last song, 'The Blackbird,' nearly made me cry. Do you know it? It so brought back to me our days at Belmont when we used to hear the birds singing all round us. So what with the concert and 3 Canadians to dinner my brain gave way before night and I could not write more to you. Euan has passed 3rd into Sandhurst, which I do think is very good considering he was always on the classical side and only had about 3 weeks to prepare for the examination. He is here now packing up, sporting an Old Wellingtonian tie, and is off to Sandhurst to-morrow. Where are you to-day? We heard that the 1st Division came up into line yesterday, so I suppose you are at it again by now. I try always at night to picture just all you are doing; somehow one is

nearer and it is more vivid when lying in the dark and the house is still. You must not think from this that I do not sleep, but I like being awake sometimes and feeling near you. Will you give the enclosed to Major Wylde. I am so sorry to worry him, but the pay people drive one mad and even now I have not got all the wives settled and this woman wants all the help one can get for her. Stewart Ferguson has been sent home with a wound in his foot and Arthur Sherston with a shot in his leg, but not bad. You are so much nearer now that numbers of wounded seem to come straight back. There is a talk of Father going out to visit Sir John French. If he does I wonder if there would be a chance of Hugh carrying you to Headquarters just to see him. That would be a joy. He will only be there for perhaps a day or two, but he is very anxious to go, for he feels it will enable him to speak with so much more authority on the Defence Committee. I will let you know in plenty of time if the plan comes off. They may want him to wait till the Indian troops arrive.

Englemere, Ascot.

Friday, 23rd.

I am longing to hear from you to know what you think of being sent for to Headquarters. The Little Man came up early this morning to tell me of a letter from Longjob,¹ saying Hugh was going to fetch you in, and all day I have been in a whirl of excitement. I know you will hate leaving the battery but do hope you will be pleased. It will be very interesting to know all that is going on, and as for me, it is wonderful; you will feel so much nearer to me and I shall know you are more comfortable in many ways. It may mean that the big disappointment of your not going

¹ *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson.*

to the Staff College is cancelled. The family are, of course, glad, and I feel you have got a big start and chance.

Englemere, Ascot.

Saturday, 24th.

We hear you are all right away on the left of the line and a French Division coming up to support, and that you have all been hard at it. The First Corps seems to have been heavily engaged. People in this country are, I think, getting quite nervous. Antwerp gave them a nasty jar, and the report in the papers that Zeppelin sheds are being built in Belgium has made things come much nearer to them, all of which is to the good, but the unpreparedness in England is marvellous.

We took Euan off to Sandhurst yesterday. He has got so keen. It must be such shy work starting there, but he seemed to have a few friends and is in Schomberg Eden's ¹ company, so he will have a friend handy. Now that you will be among the swells I must make you a silk tie to wear with a collar and am hurrying on Hawkes with a new cap. About your revolver—Schomberg Eden has been round the shops and consulted various people. He tells me there is an automatic pistol which will go easily in your pocket, but will you want it now? There are no small light revolvers in the shops.

St. Omer.

Saturday, 24th.

I have had no time to do much writing lately, and now I am back in St. Omer with, as you will have heard, a slight wound in the head. Last night I slept most comfortably wrapped in straw in a ditch beside the Zonnebeke road just behind the trenches occupied by Bernard Gordon-Lennox's

¹ *The late Colonel Schomberg Eden, the Black Watch.*

company. Theaker and Cooke were with me and we had our telephone, most cleverly laid by them, right back to the battery. Ronnie came up to relieve me in the morning and told me I was to go back to G.H.Q. for duty. I can never explain in writing how I felt. At first it seemed like drawing out of the firing line and going back to an office stool, leaving the battery to carry on the fight. It was an awful predicament. All my feelings were more mixed than I have ever known before. During the afternoon a French 'Seventy-five' battery came up behind us from the direction of Ypres, and went across into action to the battery's right rear. I was back at the battery then, and there being nothing doing, Otto and I thought we would go across and see them, for it appeared to me that they would be in full view of country held by the Germans and I was fearful they would not only get shelled themselves, but disclose our position. It was as I expected, for just as we got up to them—Whizz!—Bang!—Crash!—came three shrapnel and I found my ear was bleeding. Otto and I beat a hasty retreat and in less than three minutes the Frenchmen were driven from their guns, the fire was so hot. I went back to 4th Guards Brigade H.Q., where the doctor bound me up, and I am now quite all right. It was bad saying good-bye to the battery—I feel somehow like leaving them in the lurch and I believe they were sorry I was going.

Thus ended my service in Command of a battery—the finest Command that can fall to a man's lot. In higher Commands the personal touch is largely lost. A Battery Commander is in personal contact with every officer and man of his Command—and is to them the source of every order they receive. His sub-alterns—Commanders of the three sections into which the battery is subdivided—are his close personal lieutenants—in deed as well as name. The Captain—his confidant and counsellor—ever at

his elbow in the tactical field for advice and suggestion, while relieving him of all drudgery in administrative details. These form the board of management of the concern, which, at all times, is a grand organisation, but in time of war develops into a veritable brotherhood of arms, and—to use that hackneyed and often misunderstood phrase—a real bond of fellowship of discipline. A close and ordered family team.

It is not easy to describe my feelings when a few days after having relinquished my Command of the 'Old Rooks' I learned of their stirring action against the German Guards on 11th November, 1914—when, with 9th and 17th Batteries of XLI Brigade, 35 Heavy Battery Royal Artillery and 5th Company Royal Engineers—all privileged to support those two glorious battalions, the 1/Black Watch and 2/Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry—they defeated the final assault of the German Imperial Guard, which terminated the first Battle of Ypres.

The story of that epic fight has been told in both British and German official histories, and I cannot, perhaps, conclude better than by quoting the message received by the Brigade from its Divisional Commander on the evening of that day.

It ran as follows :

To XLI Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

My best congratulations to the splendid XLI Brigade R.F.A. They have behaved to-day as they have on every occasion in this War. I am very proud to have the honour of serving with them.

(Sd.) C. C. MUNRO,

Major-General,

Commanding 2nd Division, B.E.F.

As one of the three batteries of XLI Brigade R.F.A., the 'Old Rooks' shared this honour.

But I was not there to share it with them.

H. F. E. L.

(Concluded.)

MOUKDEN: THE CHANGING CITY.

BY J. RALPH MORTON.

As you come north to Moukden on a clear morning, you will see, before the breakfast fires have cast their shadow of smoke over the town, three buildings shining in the sunlight beyond the trees and the fields of millet. A high round water tower, the solid granite block of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank and the twin towers of the Catholic Cathedral stand serenely separated by wide seas of green. The train runs, with only a slight intermission of houses, straight from green fields into the station, and the traveller emerges expecting a city of light and space and green.

But that city he will seek long in vain. In the streets of Moukden he forgets, as the city has forgotten, that it is a city set in a green plain. In its straight, dusty, grey streets he forgets that leafy silhouette. He will see the water tower standing at the end of a drab street. He will probably have to visit the Bank, but he will never imagine that from its roof the hills are visible. The twin towers of the Cathedral he will probably never see again.

It is the railway that has made Moukden a peculiar city. When the Russian railway was built some decades ago it was not allowed to go near a city sacred with the tombs of Emperors. The railway made a loop round the city, keeping at a distance of a dozen miles. Later the loop was straightened out, but still the railway kept clear of the city. In the strip of railway territory a railway town grew up. When the railway was taken over by Japan after the Russo-Japanese War it became a Japanese town, though the layout

and buildings remained Russian. Since then it has developed greatly, but it was not till 1931 that it became anything more than a railway town.

Ten years ago there were two towns with a belt of open country between. The centre of Moukden was in the Chinese city. It was here that Chang Tso Lin lived. Here were all the Government offices and the shopping centre. The Japanese town was a detached suburb. It was a dingy town of low double-storied red-brick buildings and of streets too wide for the houses. The shops were small and poor and the grime of the railway was over everything.

In these ten years the gap between the two towns has been filled and Moukden now stretches, eastward from the station, one long city of varying width. But in these last years the centre of the city has shifted to the Japanese town.

The Japanese town has retained the symmetrical plan of the old Russian town, but it has extended the straight lines of the streets much farther and has transformed the original squalid red-brick framework by lifting the faces of the shops, by the erection of large Government offices, banks, hotels and department stores, mostly in the glazed lavatory-brick style of architecture, but mainly by the constant display of banners and flags and lanterns. It is now a city of good shops and many amusements. The Japanese schools and colleges are numerous and large and the streets seem always full of school children, conspicuous in their very ugly uniforms of a western style. The book-shops are always full of them and they seem to spend unlimited time reading the books on the shelves. But it is at night that the town is most evidently awake. Blazing lights disguise the rather shabby surface of the buildings. The shops remain open till nearly midnight. The principal shopping street is closed to vehicular traffic. By the pave-

ment on either side of the street is an uninterrupted line of barrows piled with all manner of goods. The street is brilliantly lighted and many of the stalls also have lamps. There are stalls for roast chestnuts and booths where sweetmeats are cooked. On the pavements and in the centre of the street is an unhurrying crowd of people of all ages. Night seems the time for a family jaunt or a solitary stroll and this street is the place. Despite the absence of traffic it is a noisy scene, for above the shouts of the hucksterers and the laughter of the crowd are the constant tapping of wooden pattens and the blare of loudspeakers. It is a Japanese street and the people are mostly Japanese, but Chinese—or rather Manchoukuoans—are there too. And it is probably this gaiety, more than any material advantage, that might reconcile the youth of Manchoukuo to the new state and make them disregard what their elders cannot forget.

When you leave the Japanese town you pass into a half-developed area of rectangular streets. Here foreigners may own property and carry on business, for Moukden is an old Treaty Port. Here are the foreign Consulates and the Club. The seven-storey Bank building tries to give an air of permanence to a dwindling foreign trade. But the district is not foreign in complexion. It is mainly occupied by shops and houses and by the grandiose residences of former war-lords and officials, now confiscated for Government use. In the remaining empty spaces laundrymen hang out their washing and the hopeful engineer tinkers with a broken-down car. Beyond this lies the Chinese city proper with its circular and fast-disappearing outer wall of mud and its square, inner high wall of brick. This is the real city of Moukden as the yellow roofs of the palaces reveal. But it is no longer an Imperial city. The streets have been widened. But life has passed from the place.

By day the streets are busy, but at night the place is desolate. The heart of the city is dead. The palace is a museum. What remains is a vast country town.

It is a town of closed doors and of a detached life. The consciousness of controlling the destinies of a country which gives to a capital its active life and its snobbishness has gone with the departure of its educated leaders and the removal of the Government to Hsinking. People live here not because it is the centre of the life of a large country, but because they must live somewhere and Moukden is safer than any village. Life centres round the small group : the family, the lane, the shop, the craft. There are streets devoted to one trade. Once, by chance, I came upon one small section where every shop, and there was nothing but shops, was a barber's. The shops were mere glass boxes and everywhere you looked you saw heads being shaved, as if on every side were mirrors. You would think that there was nothing to be gained by such a congregation of barbers. Probably unconsciously they were seeking not a good locality for trade, but a sense of community.

Sometimes in China you come across forgotten towns. The walls are still standing, but inside are green fields and a few farms. That is never likely to happen to Moukden as long as it remains a suburb of the Japanese city. But it is a forgotten capital. Its streets are crowded, but its life is sinking back to something more rural. And even to-day it would be largely unvisited and bereft of what traffic its streets have, if on the far side of it there were not another city. For outside the east mud wall is the Arsenal, the power-house of Manchoukuo. The station and the Arsenal are the pivots of the city as it is to-day. It is the centre, the old city, that is suburban.

Manchuria.

JOHN MASEFIELD: POET LAUREATE.

BY HERBERT PALMER.

JOHN MASEFIELD prefaced his *Collected poems* in 1923 with the following lines :

*Not of the princes and prelates with periwigged charioteers
Riding triumphantly laurelled to lap the fat of the years,—
Rather the scorned—the rejected—the men hemmed in with the
spears ;*

*The men of the tattered battalion which fights till it dies,
Dazed with the dust of the battle, the din and the cries,
The men with the broken heads and the blood running into their
eyes.*

* * * * *

*Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and the mirth,
The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth ;—
Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum of the earth !
Theirs be the music, the colour, the glory, the gold ;
Mine be a handful of ashes, a mouthful of mould,
Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the rain and the
cold—*

Of these shall my songs be fashioned, my tales be told.

Those lyrical statements and implications, though they do not quite scoop the whole cream of Masefield's poetry, make away with a great deal of it. Masefield is many good things, but he is primarily the poet of the down-and-out who refuses to accept his defeat. ¹He is the poet of the hunted, the derelict, the disreputable, the tortured, the beset, the beaten, the publican and the sinner. ²All that, and yet more than that. (For he is the poet of the man who wins.)

but who in his final or early strivings sets out against fearful odds. [In *Reynard the Fox*, a poem of many facets, the hunted and harassed human being is symbolised—as a fox. And the fox gets off. A shorter narrative poem *The Wanderer* takes the definite form of an allegory, and the Wanderer (a ship), after many bad beginnings, defeats what appears to be the determined hostility of Fate. In *The Everlasting Mercy*, in *The River*, in *Enslaved*, in *Right Royal*, in *King Cole*, in *Dauber*, there is again triumph and conquest.] In *Dauber*, it is true, there is a strong element of tragedy, but the ship's butt and failure becomes a good sailor and finally earns the respect of the crew, though he loses his life as a result of it. Sometimes an element of luck, of heavenly fortune, but supported by brave optimism, brings about the final triumph—though character is the main element in determining it. The pull is generally on the side of hope, in the direction of a man winning if he makes up his mind to it, if he lets the light of Heaven into his heart. [But as Masefield is true to life—probably truer to actual life than most of our living novelists of realism—the other side is shown as well. So two or three of his greatest metrical tales end very unpleasantly. In *The Widow in the Bye Street* and *Daffodil Fields*, passion and weakness of character get the upper hand, and there is tragedy and complete disaster.]

[Masefield is the poet of the thrashed thews and the burning heart, the complete romantic who has managed to bring poetry down to the plain reader in the street. Moreover, he is the poet of sympathy, forgiveness, and excuse.) There is nothing about him of the Hebrew prophet or the stern moraliser. [Moralist he is often, but moraliser never. He does not set out to judge, but to delineate and show.] So he delights in his riff-raff as much as in his regal people and he writes of the motley assembly which sets out in the

hunt against Reynard, as Chaucer wrote of his Canterbury Pilgrims. To Masefield they are just human beings, and the most objectionable of them not really bad.

For a time Masefield helped to popularise modern poetry, especially among the people who read nothing later than Tennyson. By 1910 Kipling had had his day, his great vogue, and suddenly Masefield stepped triumphantly into his shoes. But he went a great deal further in his verse than Kipling, besides being nearly as prolific in other directions. He has written plays and novels as well as poems, and the ' motives ' in all of them are rather much the same as in the poems. His colour, passion and humanity set him beside Shakespeare as well as Chaucer.

Resemblances to Chaucer are, of course, rather obvious, though it was some time before they were noticed. Indeed, he is the greatest and most prolific story-writer in verse since Chaucer, greater than Byron or Crabbe (two opposite poets whom he has probably read with pleasure) or than Longfellow, Tennyson, Scott, or William Morris. Probably it is not too extravagant to say that he is the greatest story-writer in verse in the English language, for being a modern he has better command of the machinery and technique of the story than had Chaucer, and he certainly does not digress from the main theme so frequently. In regard to Shakespeare, his affinity is nothing like so plain, for he is not lavish with impelling phrases and memorable lines, and he has generally chosen to write in rhyme instead of blank verse, while there is not much of a deeply philosophic or contemplative character in his work. But his treatment of theme, his bite and snap, his florid romanticism, his realism interwoven with romanticism, his passion, his gift for strong, clear characterisation, his command of plentiful vocabulary (archaic and vernacular as well as modern) and his way of

giving the root, stalk, and leaves of poetry as well as the flower, fix him closer to Shakespeare than many other considerable English poets. And not the least of these evidences is his characterisation. In the work (I speak chiefly of the verse) of no other English poet are there so many living, breathing, convincing people. He has given us a gallery of broad portraits and thumb-nail sketches, and though Sir Walter Scott has done much more of it if you fling the novels upon the top of the verse, he is not particularly strong in characterisation, and Masefield as a poet is to be judged chiefly by his metrical work.

Moreover, his short critical study of Shakespeare reveals fundamental understanding as well as admiration ; and in a small way of comparison it is interesting to note that the rhyme-arrangement of his sonnet-series is cast in the Shakespearean mould. Beyond that, all his verse is stage verse, in that it has been written to be spoken. This was evident from the very first, but in a post-War volume (by no means his best) he made it clearer, for on a frontal leaf to *Minnie Maylow's story and other tales* (a volume of 250 pages) he printed, 'I thank the beautiful speakers . . . who, in the speaking of these tales and scenes, have deeply delighted me.' His creative output has been enormous ; and adding to the verse his novels and plays, it is possibly greater than that of any other English poet except Sir Walter Scott. Exuberance, too, was one of the hall-marks of Shakespeare.

None of which proves that Masefield is a second Shakespeare or even stands very close to him ; but it does show that he is directly of Shakespeare's company, and that he stands at his right side, even though there may be a very considerable space between the two, showing too that he is a hundred times more of an Elizabethan than such an overrated poet as T. S. Eliot.

It is not at all just to say that Masefield's romanticism is too dingy and everyday, too much of the quality of realism in tinsel robes. For what of his post-War volumes, particularly *Midsummer Night* (a book of poems which has never received its appreciative due) in which he revitalises so many of the Arthurian legends and brings us back into the atmosphere of Malory and Edmund Spenser and the *Mabinogion* ?

As a poet Masefield has always stood rather alone. During his early years of fame he had many followers ; but adverse criticism got strongly to work, and prevented anything in the nature of vigorous discipleship. Still, in the modern verse tale it is sometimes easy to trace his influence. J. Redwood Anderson started off as a Masefield follower before he struck into a completely different groove of his own, his *Flemish Tales* obviously influenced by Masefield. And Edward Thompson's recent prose play on Raleigh's last voyage (a very fine piece of work) is closer to Masefield than is most other contemporary drama.

✓Masefield's earliest volumes were comprised of short lyrics, in which he shows admirations and influences coming from the old Ballad, and from Stevenson, Kipling, Newbolt, Yeats and even Arthur Symons (who was one of the most considerable influences on pre-Georgian verse). ✓They were bright-blooded impulsive singing things—poems of passion and ecstasy, of nostalgia and dissatisfaction with bourgeois life, poems of the open road and the stormy sea. In the first volume there was much that was reminiscent of Kipling, and in each of them a strong human element and many thumb-nail sketches. One would have expected the immediate rapid success that attended Newbolt's *Admirals All* and Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads* ; but such was not to be, and for a long time the poems lay in Elkin Mathew's bookshop unsold—until the publication of *The Everlasting*

Mercy brought Masefield before the eye of a very wide public. Most of the contents to-day are well known, and a dozen of them are almost hackneyed ; but what appears to me to be the pearl of them from the standpoint of pure poetry (*The Dead Knight*) has been left alone by most of the anthologists—a poem, too, which may have had some slight influence upon T. S. Eliot in both *The Waste Land* and *The Hollow Men*, and which communicates most strangely and awfully, in spite of some slight imperfections, and which is really cunningly original, in spite of its relationship to the Scotch ballad-song, *Twa Corbies* :

*The cleanly rush of the mountain air,
And the mumbling, grumbling humble-bees,
Are the only things that wander there ;
The pitiful bones are laid at ease,
The grass has grown in his tangled hair,
And a rambling bramble binds his knees.*

*To shrieve his soul from the pangs of hell,
The only requiem-bells that rang
Were the hare-bell and the heather-bell.
Hushed he is with the holy spell
In the gentle hymn the wind sang,
And he lies quiet, and sleeps well.*

*He is bleached and blanched with the summer sun,
The misty rain and cold dew
Have altered him from the kingly one
(That his lady loved, and his men knew)
And dwindled him to a skeleton.*

*The vetches have twined about his bones,
The straggling ivy twists and creeps
In his eye-sockets ; the nettle keeps
Vigil about him while he sleeps.
Over his body the wind moans*

*With a dreary tune throughout the day,
In a chorus wistful, eerie, thin
As the gull's cry—as the cry in the bay,
The mournful word the seas say
When tides are wandering out or in.*

Then to that add *The West Wind*, with its lovely opening stanza :

*It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries ;
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes,
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.*

And then the lurid beauty and energy of *Third Mate* in such stanzas as :

*Grey were her eyes, and her hair was long and bonny,
Golden was her hair, like the wild bees' honey.
And I was but a dog, and a mad one to despise
The gold of her hair and the grey of her eyes.*

And then the fierce realism of :

*The town begins on the sea-beaches,
And the town's mad with the stinging flies,
The drinking water's mostly leeches ;
It's a far remove from Paradise
Is Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.*

*There's sand-bagging and throat-slitting
And quiet graves in the sea slime,
Stabbing, of course, and rum-hitting,
Dirt, and drink, and stink, and crime,
In Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.*

Consider such poems and snatches, and one does get a sort of presage and epitome of the Masefield to come, though very few of his reviewers could see it at the time.

In 1911 he was a comparatively unknown writer, and when in that year he sent a poem (*The Everlasting Mercy*) of enormous dimensions to the *English Review* there was consternation in the offices. The editors, Austin Harrison and Norman Douglas, liked it mightily, but it was too long, a third the length of any issue of the *English Review*. Moreover, it was full of oaths and curses, language to shock every drawing-room and literary *salon*. They were terrified of it. But how stirring it seemed ! What was to be done ? Should they attempt it ? They did ; and the *English Review* went straightway out of print. Masefield was made for life, and the *English Review* increased its circulation. Then the publishers Sidgwick and Jackson reprinted the poem in book form, and it went into edition after edition. The reviewers cursed and blessed it, and the Nonconformist clergy quoted from it in their Sunday sermons. It was even a bigger literary sensation than Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads*.

It had taken Masefield nine years to win his spurs, though actually he had deserved them earlier.

His poems had been born out of much experience and many vicissitudes. He had been a sailor, a pot boy in an American public-house, an occasional scribbler. Continually a wanderer, a changer, a rover. His life has never been disentangled, and probably never will be, for he has forbidden it and put difficulties in the way. At any rate he seems to have lived many years in London, enduring many grinding hardships there as elsewhere, just before his spring to fame. Many of his poems are manifestly autobiographical, or strongly touched with personal experience,

even where such experience is transmuted and changed. Though one must take the opening lines of *The Everlasting Mercy* with a strong pinch of salt when wild-brained critics tell us that they have direct application to Masefield himself, for the only sense we can make of that is that the man died before he was born and is recording his pre-existence.

From '41 to '51

*I was my folk's contrary son ;
I bit my father's hand right through
And broke my mother's heart in two.
I sometimes go without my dinner
Now that I know the times I've gi'n her.*

From '51 to '61

*I cut my teeth and took to fun.
I learned what not to be afraid of
And what stuff women's lips are made of ;
I learned with what a rosy feeling
Good ale makes floors seem like the ceiling
And how the moon gives shiny light
To lads as roll home singing by't.
My blood did leap, my flesh did revel,
Saul Kane was tokened to the devil.*

From '61 to '67

*I lived in disbelief of heaven.
I drunk, I fought, I poached, I whored,
I did despite unto the Lord,
I cursed, 'twould make a man look pale,
And nineteen times I went to jail.
Now friends, observe and look upon me,
Mark how the Lord took pity on me.*

The Everlasting Mercy was followed by equally long verse tales. *The Widow in the Bye Street*, which came immediately after, was greeted with a good deal of resentment, and abused for what it was not, as much as for what it was. It

was a short novel that ought to have been written in prose rather than verse. And it contained hardly any poetry, and was just hard bare rhymed narrative, and was full of violence and unpleasantness. Something similar had been said by the critics who were adverse to *The Everlasting Mercy*; but now the chorus of disapproval was doubled. *The Everlasting Mercy* was passable, particularly as it was about salvation, about the reform of a sinner, ending up as it did with a strong Christian message; but this new poem was just downright stark raving realism, without a glint of sunshine in it. As a matter of fact, you might nearly as aptly condemn a greater work, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, for similar reasons. *The Widow in the Bye Street* is probably the best of the verse tales, judged solely from the standpoint of its grip, its delineation of character, its unity, and the way it mounts into the final tragedy. Such occurrences happen every day, exactly like that, save that a murder and hanging do not always wind up the works. And the atmosphere of the pit bank and mining country is very correctly thrown upon the screen. The poetry lies in the pity. It lies in 'the purification of the passions by pity and terror.' This particular poem must be judged from its whole, not its parts. And it is to be praised for its strong, forward-marching, sustained rhythm. Nor is it entirely devoid of striking passages—as for instance :

*Man cannot call the brimming instant back ;
Time's an affair of instants spun to days ;
If man must make an instant gold, or black,
Let him, he may, but Time must go his ways.
Life may be duller for an instant's blaze,
Life's an affair of instants spun to years,
Instants are only cause of all these tears.*

His blackest work, a play *The Tragedy of Nan*, is written

in prose, and is a sort of version of *Cinderella* with a dreadful ending. It is less even than *The Widow in the Bye Street*, for Masefield to remind the reader that he is writing poetical drama, introduces a blind and very crazy old fiddler who speaks out of the current mode. The old gaffer's speeches never get across to the reader, and they encroach on the very effective dialogue of the other *dramatis personæ*. Indeed, in comparison with the wild poet's speeches in Yeats's *The Countess Kathleen*, they are strained and unreal. The influence of Synge as well as Yeats seems to be in it, and there are resemblances linking up with the German dramatists Sudermann and Gerhard Hauptmann—and with that grim Elizabethan, Webster. West Country dialect seeks to do the work of verse, and very effectively where the crazy fiddler doesn't butt in. The play is overwhelmingly sombre, and different from most of Masefield's other work in that poor Nan seems to be entirely the victim of Fate. Her final action does not seem to come from her own initiative. She is a gentle, fine-natured creature, but foully ill-used, and the madness of passion which transports her at the end seems to come from a horseplay of revengeful ghosts, who have taken possession of her. One is conscious of some element of free-will guiding the actions of the characters in *The Widow in the Bye Street*, so that its dreadful ending is compatible with the romantic idea of tragedy. But poor Nan seems to be a mere tool in the hands of Destiny—and that is definitely no part of Masefield's real 'message.'

A ballad lyric which occurs in a later book, *Lollingdon Downs*, and obviously thrown off from *The Tragedy of Nan* and *The Widow in the Bye Street*, has been much depreciated and attacked by the 'Georgian' critics, although in its impelling music and original form it is a masterpiece of a kind, and nearer to the ancient Border Ballad in content

and atmosphere and the intense pity and horror it evokes, than most other short poems in modern literature. . . . A drunken farmer beats his daughter. The son kills the father in a sudden passion of indignation. The son is hanged, and the daughter, growing suddenly old from the shock, walks the countryside demented, and soon after dies :

*Jane walked the wold
Like a grey gander ;
All grown old
She would wander.*

*She died soon :
At high-tide,
At full moon,
Jane died.*

*The brook chatters
As at first ;
The farm it waters
Is accurst.*

*No man takes it,
Nothing grows there ;
Blood straiques it,
A ghost goes there.*

In the earlier part of the poem the odd rhymes ' daughter,' ' oughter' and ' clubbed,' ' upped' have been adversely criticised, though they are consistent with the uncertain rhyming of old folk-lore poetry, sounding quite natural in their context.

[Masefield has been attacked as a slipshod poet, for being careless and slapdash in his diction.] But the Aunt-Sally stone-flingers have rather overstated their grievance. It is true that he is sometimes disconcertingly uneven, and sometimes inserts nonsensical or inept words for the mere sake

of effecting a correct rhyme. But this does not occur on every page, and it is better to be like that than to be merely bloodlessly competent. He is certainly no true-blue 'Georgian,' and even less of a 'Parnassian,' and there is a big gap between him and Flecker. But in the frequent richness of his rhythms he and Flecker do sometimes clasp hands across the severing chasm. One of Masefield's most alienating rhymes occurs in that really good and exciting narrative poem *The Fight on the Wall*, where Modred and his followers storm into the privacy of Lancelot and Guinivere :

*'Come out,' the dozen cried : 'No quarter
If we are forced to storm'
'Go, Joure' said Modred, 'to the dorter . . .
Bring up a form . . .'
'We're bringing up a form to batter
The door about your ears . . .
We'll have your head upon a platter,
My prince, sans peers.'*

Here may well be asked : Why bring in the atmosphere of the schoolroom and office by introducing such an ambiguous substantive as 'form' ? 'Bench' is manifestly the word needed, only it does not rhyme. No, Masefield does not bother himself sufficiently, and gets on with the next job. Still, surely Shakespeare sometimes did the same, for not quite all his oddities are due to misprints or words that have changed in meaning, or to good grammar that has become obsolete. Much can be forgiven to any poet who gives so plentifully and exuberantly. It is only where the output is small that we must be exacting and demand continuous perfection. So we may forgive Shakespeare and poets like Browning and Masefield where we ought to be harder upon John Donne and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

[Masefield is a poet of the emotions ; and probably the greatest poet of the primitive passions since Shakespeare. But he is also the poet of the Quest—of the knight who sets out to find the Holy Grail. He is a great seeker, if he is not always a very certain finder. Despair has no place in his work, for he is always looking forward. He hopes and desires, setting no narrow limits upon belief, and has a childlike fundamental faith in the goodness of humanity. Speaking for himself and his brother poets, he has said in one of his early lyrics :

*Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth nor blessed abode,
But the hope of the City of God at the other end of the road.*]

And in another poem, written about the same time, he seems to see himself and all such seekers in *The Ballad of Sir Bors* :

*Would I could see it, the rose, when the light begins to fail,
And a lone white star in the West is glimmering on the mail ;
The red, red passionate rose of the sacred blood of the Christ,
In the shining chalice of God, the cup of the Holy Grail.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

*It will happen at last, at dusk, as my horse limps down the fell,
A star will glow like a note God strikes on a silver bell,
And the bright white birds of God will carry my soul to Christ,
And the sight of the Rose, the Rose, will pay for the years of
hell.*

Such notes sound odd to-day, for though they are sane and necessary notes, they express hope and spiritual desire, and modern poetry is now 'modernist' and defeatist—in which circle Masefield has no place.

DARK HORSES.

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

[At Merton Magna, in East Devon, live Richard Challice, wheelwright, Ivy, his wife, Leonard, Samson, and Linda, his children, and Verity, his old mother. Simon Pye, friendly, retired neighbour, engages Richard to look after his orchard and Linda as maidservant: he makes friends with the Challices and gives Richard his dream, a piece of land on which is a disused lime-kiln. Simon's son, Gerald, visits his father and sets his snares for Linda. Gerald murderously drives over Richard as he tries to prevent Linda's elopement. After long silence Linda returns home—alone]

XVII.

LINDA TELLS HER TALE.

It happened that Ivy Challice was away nursing a sick bachelor brother ten miles distant. Nor were Leonard and Samson returned from the festivities of the night. Verity had gone to bed, but Richard shouted the news at her door and she rose up and put on her clothes and came down to greet her granddaughter. She hugged the girl close and blessed her.

'You poor pilgarlic ¹—so you've got away from him at last,' she said.

Then the old woman hurried off for food, and Dick made up the fire.

Linda was glad to learn that her mother would not see her immediately. In the mental stress and storm of her return, little things intruded and trifles broke the strain. She felt a sort of happiness in the tiny environment of her home, for it

¹ *Pilgarlic*: an object of pity.

seemed to have shrunk in all its dimensions and become reduced to the size of a doll's house. Yet she marked the familiar furniture around her and the old scents upon the air and the hearth. She was glad to be back and thankful at her kind reception. Richard asked no questions, but sat with his arm around her and sighed deep contented sighs ; her grandmother brought food and watched her eat and drink. She loved the food and the tea with the old familiar taste. Then Verity saw the wedding-ring and cried out.

'Hell !' she said. 'What does that mean, Linda ?'

'Nothing,' answered the girl. 'A fraud, like much else—done with now, Grandmother.'

She took off the ring and flung it into the fire.

'If anything could have made me want to see you no more, it would have been that,' said Granny Challice.

'I'll tell you the mortal truth in a minute,' promised Linda. 'From the beginning to the end of it. And there won't be any more frauds about me. And what the rest think is no matter, so long as you two understand. I didn't know till I had his arms around me just now whether Father was alive or dead, so I'm shook up for the minute and just choked with thankfulness to know he's here yet ; but the point for you to grasp before you can think I'm anything but a devil is this, Granny : I didn't hear till yesterday that any harm had ever overtaken him. And when I did know, I came back the first instant moment I might.'

They looked at her and marked the changes. These were not physical, for she appeared healthy and strong and capable as ever. Nor had her beauty waned. But her voice was harder and her eyes were harder. If the home had contracted to Linda, she herself seemed a bigger woman to those who listened now. She appeared perfectly self-possessed and clear-witted. She was the old Linda, yet with much of

experience added. Verity marked the changes and uttered a wonder.

‘How the mischief could one like you be hoodwinked that way, Linda?’ she asked.

‘I’m the sort that are hoodwinked,’ the girl answered. ‘I’ve often asked myself the same question in the last few months. Love’s love, and if ever a woman loved a man with her heart and soul and body, I loved that man. I’ll come to that in its place, Granny. There’s nothing going to be hid from either of you. Will I tell you to-morrow, or are you up to hearing to-night?’

‘Come to the fire and tell to-night,’ said Richard, ‘though for my part, since you’re still yourself, and glad to be back with me, I care not for the details. Say you’ll bide home for evermore—that’s all I want to know.’

‘I’ll bide home for evermore, Father. There’s a lot I’m wishful to know, too, because all’s yet a mystery so far as you’re concerned. I know how you came by your hurt; but I don’t know a little bit how you was there to be hurt.’

‘Leave all that and tell your tale first,’ said Verity. ‘We always knew that though you was in the car when that imp of Satan ran him down, you couldn’t have guessed what he’d done.’

‘God’s my witness I didn’t,’ said the girl. ‘And I can begin from there. You know what went before, and you know I ordained to run away, because in my letter left for Father, I told him so. And when I wrote it, I counted to be married inside a few days. I came to the bridge by an appointment and I got in the car behind Gerald, and then the lights went out and I felt a jolt and knew we’d hit something; but the car roared ahead and the lights came on again, and later, when I asked what it was, he laughed and said he was

afraid he'd run over a pig. That's all I ever heard of the truth till yesterday.'

'Go on from there then,' said Verity.

'We ran through the night and I thought we were going to London, but we were not. When the morning came he said how he'd taken rooms by the seaside in a quiet little place he knew down Margate way. He remembered I was wishful to be by the sea and everything was cut and dried. He didn't throw cold water on marriage too quick for fear of frightening me. We were going to have a bit of fun by the sea and he was going to teach me to swim and so on—a thing he knew I longed to learn—and then, when his holiday was over, we were going straight to London to be married before he went back to his serious work. I was shook up at that ; but what's the use of making excuses ? I believed in him and I trusted him, because I loved him and longed for him more than anything on earth. We lived together and he poured his wisdom into me and showed me what life was. People stared at us when we went swimming, and we knew we were a grand pair of creatures, and so did everybody else. But still it was understood and granted by him that we should be married when we went to London, because I told him that until then I couldn't write home and wasn't going to. He was at me all the time dropping the modern ideas about marriage in my ears and making more and more light of it ; but he worked terrible cunning and always dried up when I got vexed. Still he'd come back to the subject, and I couldn't but see how times had changed and how we were a good bit behind 'em in this little place. He was delighted to find how clever I could be. He said that I was like the dew of the morning to such as him and swore he'd never known what love could be before he loved me. And I do believe that was true. Anyway, come presently I paid the price what most

women have got to pay for loving a man, and I enjoyed every minute of it, and it made all the rest of my life looking back no more than a child living in its nursery.'

Linda stopped for breath ; but the listeners said nothing. Presently she went on again.

'There's much that don't bear thinking about nor telling about even to you. I knew I'd cut myself off. I knew what I'd lost. My conscience, so to call it, was at me oft enough ; but I worshipped the man and I jumped at his wisdom, because his wisdom smothered my conscience and made me think I only believed a lot of bygone wisdom because I'd been taught to believe it. And a lot he showed me was nonsense, for certain, and I felt thankful to throw it over, because I knew there wasn't going to be any room in my life for it again. Little by little I changed under him—every day something—and my love always ready to make his voice ring the note of truth. He was gentle and swore he felt eternally grateful to me for loving him so dear. He knew I was proud and he knew what I'd done had shook my pride, and he set to work to make me proud again and showed in his crafty way what a lot I'd got to be proud of. Difficult to explain, but so it was. There never could be no closer understanding between a man and a woman than grew up between us, and never a woman learned more from a man than I've learned from him. I'm twenty years older and a lifetime wiser than I was last summer. He knew how to gilt the pill and make lots of his lies shine like truth.'

'No matter for all that,' interrupted Verity. 'There's things that we want to know, Linda. You've won clear of him, and 'tis no pleasure for your father to hear you wallow in all that stuff about him. The only deed of mercy ever I'll hear about him is that he didn't keep his oath and marry you. No mercy neither but only cursed selfish-

ness at bottom. And I hope hell's true when I think on him.'

'Let her run on her own way and tell the tale as she's minded to, Mother,' said Richard. Then he turned to Linda.

'Tell it your own way and leave out nought to make it easier for you, my love.'

'I must let you see how he worked on me,' she continued, 'else you'll never understand how I'm changed in my intellects. You may say 'tis for the worse, but that's no odds to me so long as you grasp how it came about. Mind you, he never got in the thin end of the wedge rough or cruel. He had a wondrous way to do it so as I shouldn't feel no pain. He never scoffed at my girl talk and my girl opinions and the things I thought important. He just listened and even praised my foolery sometimes ; but he always came back by easy stages to the fact that very few ideas and opinions of us human beings are worth a second thought. He said the wisdom of to-day is always the nonsense of the day after and the myths and moonshine of the day after that. He said the less we believe, the lighter we'd go and the easier and the farther. He said that half the stuff we're taught to cling to is only a bar to our happiness, and the quicker we clear it away, the better for our happiness. He said that faith in a lot of things is no better than sitting in the foul air of a rubbish heap, instead of setting about to clear it away. All for freedom he was—or so it seemed to me. He said he'd been free all his life and wouldn't be content until I was as free as him. And when he frightened me, then he knew how to calm me again. How was an ignorant girl bursting with love to see any other side to him ? He'd have deceived women far older and cleverer than me if they'd loved him like I did. He knew more about us women than most of us know about ourselves. I'd shiver sometimes, and sometimes I'd feel almost to hate

him ; and then I'd adore him again. It sounds creepy to you, I reckon, but it's true. He'd look in my face sometimes and tell me what I was thinking of—and hateful things like that ; and then he'd kiss my hand and tell me he wasn't worthy to tie my shoe-latchet.'

'Tis good you'll never breathe the same air as him no more,' said her father. 'But run on, Linda. Get the poison out of your mind.'

'He loved me all right,' she continued. 'He loved me in those far-off days so much as he could love ; but there was one thing that living with him so close I soon found out. At his loving best, he never loved me like he loved himself. I never heard tell of any human creature that adored himself same as he did. His body was his god—not my body. I'd laugh sometimes and tell him he needn't pretend to no religion, because his body was his religion.'

'That's how it was then,' she went on, 'and I want to set out everything in order and then never go back to it no more. I loved him once. He made me know what passion was, and I had my full of it, so far as he chose to let me. And that's deep knowledge along with the rest. I've had it and I don't want no more ; I've loved, where I'd give my soul to forget it. I've loved where now I hate.'

'So long as you hate, then your future's clear, Linda,' said Verity.

'Yes, I hate, though the hate will die like the love when years pass over me,' she answered. 'They'll go the same way and they come from the same breeding-place. Gerald Pye was a filthy devil under his skin. I got to see glimpses and couldn't believe my ears at first. But you can't play-act for ever. A time comes when you let the hidden truth about yourself slip out, try as you may. And presently he didn't trouble to try. But that was later on. What first I found

out came sudden and made me shiver and crawl, like a nightmare does. I found that in some fashion his mind was a lot older than his body, and though his body was clean and hard and young and sweet, his mind had got the rot in it. He'd say things sometimes that you knew by instinct no young man could say, nor yet think.'

'Wickedness is always old,' said Verity. 'That's why we tell about things being so old as sin.'

'He'd look ahead and be cautious and almost timid where no young man could be either,' continued Linda. 'He was always looking ahead and plotting and scheming, and I knew presently that, under his devotion and his presents and marvellous tricks to please and his thought for my eternal happiness along with him, he was going first to cut the ground away from under my feet and separate me from all of you. And, still thinking he cared for me a lot too much not to marry me, I told myself that when we were wed, he'd soon learn different about my family. His father was never out of his thoughts very long, because he didn't mean to lose his inheritance, and so he had to plan how he'd keep in with Mr. Pye. But never from the first moment he saw me did he mean to marry me. And now I'm coming to the time when I changed my own feeling as to that and was thankful to God he wouldn't.'

'Go on to when your trip by the sea ended, and the flame was dying in you,' said Verity.

'It died hard,' she confessed frankly, 'but it began to die a few weeks after we came to London and he tried his new trick upon me. First he turned everything topsy-turvy about marriage and took it for granted I shared his feelings about it. He said I was no woman to be chained with ropes of steel to any man and all that stuff; and then he knew I'd come down to bed-rock and want to tell my father how it was. I

reminded him that my people were waiting to hear about me and must do so. But I hadn't reached the pitch that I could dream of living without him any more. And he knew I hadn't. And he didn't mean to part with me yet awhile neither. So when I said I was going to write and give my address and own up, he sprang his plot and told me what he ordained for us to do. "We're as good as married," he said, "and you pass now for my wife and my pals believe you are my wife. So what about it? Why hurt any old-fashioned people needlessly? Why fret and worry our good fathers by telling them that we're living in freedom and loving each other the better for the freedom? A child could see the needless cruelty of that." So he put it. He was busy just then and we went north to one or two race meetings; but his grand idea was for me to write home and say we were wed. Then, presently we'd come down to Merton for a few days as man and wife. I was to write and say we'd come along when we could spare the time. A clever thought from his point of view, and the first thing to call a row we ever had was when I refused to do it. Hard he tried to show me the common sense of doing that; and I saw that all right; but I wouldn't. I told the man I'd do most things for him, but I was never going to lie for him. And he knew I meant it, and it puzzled him a lot, because lying was second nature to him.'

'Where did you go in London?' asked her father, 'and why did you hide from us?'

'Because I hadn't reached the thought ever to come back again,' she answered. 'I found pretty soon after we came to London that he wasn't going to marry me, and I got to a stage myself soon after when that troubled me no more. He'd knocked the bottom out of marriage by then, and I knew in my bones we'd part soon or late. But I also knew how it would look to you and all here, and I guessed that so

soon as ever you and Mr. Pye heard tell where we were, you'd be after him. Your point of view was going to be very different, and so like as not I never would have dared to come back at all but for what I found out yesterday. I've come back for bare need to know all there was to know here.

'We lived in rooms up Paddington way to be near the station for him. Just comfortable, respectable rooms; and he had a streak of luck and let me learn to dance, which I did do. He knew I was getting troubled, and he was troubled himself—not about us, but about his father. He'd accuse me of queering his pitch with his father if we didn't do as he wanted and come down and say we were married; and then we began to have a few rows. But we always made 'em up again. I didn't worship him like I used by now; because I'd seen through him and knew he was muck; but I loved him pretty hot off and on still. He never asked anybody to come in, but he'd give a little spread at an eating-house now and then to his sporting friends, and he'd take me to a night club now and again and introduce me as his wife to people he knew. Fancy me in that world! He praised me for facing up to it so fine and he said he was proud of me and so on.'

Linda broke off and reflected.

'I don't want to miss out nothing that matters,' she went on. 'All I saw and heard, and the races I went to along with him would fill a book; but I'm only wishful to tell you the leading points. One thing I soon found out: his friends knew very well indeed we weren't married. Whether he told 'em behind my back, or whether, knowing him, they felt certain sure of it, I couldn't say; but they knew, and sometimes when I felt I'd never see any of you again and might well be refused even if I offered to come, I'd bear certain things in my mind. More than once, when he was

away for the day, some of his men friends came to see me unbeknownst to him, and I found that two of them were ready and willing to marry me, and another offered me big money to chuck Gerald and go and live with him. It all sounds pretty heathen to you, no doubt, but I'm far beyond shocking nowadays and I could see these men might be relied upon a lot more than my man. They weren't a patch on him for looks, nor yet so clever so to say ; but they were worth a million of him for quality and decency. So I knew where I stood. I never feared Gerald, and when I got to know my power, I tightened up a bit where he was concerned. Not that I wanted anybody else. I've had all I want of a man, and I'd rather bide here to my life's end than go to another.'

'What minded you to drop him at last then ?' asked Verity.

'Just coming to that, Granny. He wasn't tired of me as yet, but I knew he mighty soon would be if I took to crossing him. He'd got in sight of his mother's money by now and stood to have a lot of capital to his hand when he turned thirty. And he dangled that a bit and promised me a sea voyage to see foreign lands if I was good. Of course he knew me inside out by now and the things I fancied most. But I didn't respond much, because I was sick of the life and the people and the town. A god-forsaken business living in a street of houses, whether you're virtuous or whether you ain't. About then I wrote to you and told you I was all right, and presently Gerald wrote to his father to the same tune : but he didn't want nobody butting in and would give no address. He changed his quarters, and for a bit we went north and then returned to London again. But he knew the end was coming in sight, and so did I. He said once " My hold's getting weaker on you, Linda." " Yes," I answered,

“and my hold’s getting weaker on you.” He didn’t deny it, because we knew each other too well by now to deceive each other.

‘The rows began to come quicker between us and he did some beastly, swindling things I didn’t hold with. I told him he was a thief to his face one day, and all he said was I’d got a lot to learn still and he’d break me in yet. He broke me in to a tidy tune, no doubt. I couldn’t live with him so long without having plenty of my old notions shook out of me ; but not all. He found himself up against bed-rock in some directions, and he didn’t like it when he did. Our quarrels had got an edge to ’em by now and took longer to make up. I found out, of course, that his ruling passion after himself was pride, and what he couldn’t forgive was when I hurt his pride. It was a fool’s game to do it, but I didn’t know that when I sneered at him and cheapened his cleverness and hinted there was plenty cleverer than him in the world and honest as well. I didn’t know the whole truth about him yet, else I wouldn’t have took such a risk. It was playing with fire, and if he hadn’t liked me close to him still, he would have took his revenge ; but he gave himself away in time for me to save myself—else I dare say he’d have—’

‘Tell the facts, Linda ; tell the facts,’ said Verity ; but the girl shook her head impatiently.

‘Bear with me and let me flow on,’ she answered. ‘You’re getting the facts and you’re getting more than the facts, because I’m letting you see where I might be but for luck. A very amazing thing happened yesterday—a thing I never knew to happen before. He made a slip ; and it’s owing to that slip I’m here this minute ; and it’s because he made that slip and gave me a glimpse behind the scenes of the man, that I tell you of the dangers I was running into when I despised him to his face, and the luck I’ve had to escape ’em.’

‘ So long as you know I was right about him it’s all one,’ said Granny Challice.

‘ You were right so far as you went, but long ways short of the truth of him. You knew he was a liar and a rotter ; but you never rose to think he might be a killer. That’s where my luck came in : I found it out, and well as I knew his views of life, I was mazed to find it out. And after that I saw I was walking on pretty thin ice myself by now. I’d have left him then. I’d have left him in any case when I knew what he could do ; but it was when I learned what he had done already that I felt I’d been giving myself to a poisonous snake.

‘ And all along of a slip he made,’ she repeated. ‘ He never made but one all the time I knew him, and he made that by the will of God without a doubt. He was forced to make it, because it wasn’t true to his character and he did a thing he often boasted to me he’d never done and never would do. Just for half a minute he lost his temper—only half a minute ; but that was enough. It seemed as if a tiger you thought was tame had suddenly broke the bars of its cage and leapt out, like a devil in a beast’s skin, to slay you. I’d stung him on purpose, because he’d angered me above a bit and I laughed at his vanity and told him his looks weren’t wearing so well as he thought and he turned round and warned me—quite quiet so far. And I laughed again and said something more ; and then he broke loose and told me what he’d done to you, Father. “ That’s what one fool got for crossing me,” he said. “ And that’s what you’ll damned soon get yourself if you don’t watch out.” Just mad for the moment ; and then he set about to undo the harm he’d done. In his rage he said he’d killed my father ; but I kept my nerve, or you may say my nerve was kept for me, because when he told that, I felt as if I’d got a blow on my head and stared at

him stunned. My bones turned to water and I couldn't move a finger nor yet answer for a long time ; and that was the saving of me very like, because my brain worked and I took wondrous care not to anger him again. He saw he'd shook me to the depths, of course, and cursed himself for a silly fool. He tried to pass it off and said that it was all lies, spoken in rage to terrify me and not a word of truth in 'em. "'Twas a pig as I told you at the time—not your father or anybody else," he said and swore to ; and then he argued and made light of it and said his silly lie could deceive nobody, because what the mischief would have brought you out to Withy Platt at that time of night ? I couldn't answer that myself and you can tell me about that later ; but the point is how, for once in my life, I acted in a manner to deceive the man. I never deceived him before, because it was always in his power to see through any little tricks of mine, and for that matter I hadn't got nothing to deceive him about ; but I was worked up to deceive him then, and I got away with it. I cried—a thing he'd seldom seen me do—and I thanked God it wasn't true about my father, and I said that, for all my sharp tongue, I loved him and knew him too well to think he could have done such a thing. I asked him to forgive me for what I'd said, and told him I'd drunk too much with my dinner, and stuff like that ; and he believed me and reckoned he was well out of it—asked me to forgive him, too, for hatching such a cruel falsehood and swore he'd never met a man he admired more than you, Father. And I breathed again and played my part till morning and woke when he slept and wished I had the nerve to put a knife into him. He was a bit crestfallen in the morn and I knew he hated himself for his slip ; but I carried on and told him that we mustn't have no more rows else it would be the death of me. He was bound for the races that day and not coming home till

to-morrow, so I kissed him good-bye and waited till I knew he was off and then escaped and took the first train out of Paddington to find if you was alive or dead.'

'You'd best listen to me now, my dear,' said Richard, 'and how I came to know your purpose and thought to stop you and failed so bad.'

He explained the past and how he had read her letter before the day she meant it should reach him. Then Verity took up the story and let Linda understand all they had been called to suffer.

'While you was learning to swim, Linda, your father was fighting for his life. But there's no call to rub that in now. You little knew or guessed, and you've got the future along with him to make good. And you will make good.'

So she concluded and then went to prepare a bedroom as Linda's brothers returned from their revel. They were glad because they saw their father was glad; but they showed shyness before her, for she seemed strange to them, as one from another world than any they knew. She had already seen both of them before 'Prospect Place,' and when they heard that she had done so and was not angered at the revel, they cheered up. Leonard even confessed his part in the business.

''Twas I made the "guy" for vengeance,' he said, 'and I hope you won't think none the worse of me, Linda.'

'I knew what was meant,' she answered, 'and I shan't think none the worse of you for it, Len.'

XVIII.

CHANGE.

Linda henceforth devoted herself to Richard and displayed the utmost indifference to any other interest. She made her position clear from the outset and, from her new angle of vision, only charged herself with wrong-doing in connection with her father. She was responsible for all that had happened to him and she designed that, as far as possible, her life would be dedicated to him. The change for the cripple became instantly apparent ; he rejoiced at her return and was full of the new peace of mind and contentment that it brought. While Richard marvelled at her new breadth of mind and perceived that her experience had in no way spoiled Linda's frank and fearless nature, she noted the changes in him and soon saw that his intellect was not as clear as of old. The weakness arising from his illness had no effect on character, but intensified certain characteristic qualities. He was hopeful as ever and looked forward to prosperity ; but reality concerned him even less than it had ever done ; he trusted the future and looked forward to great to-morrows like a child.

'Now you're back,' he would often say to Linda, 'life will straighten out. You can think and I can act.'

She displayed no embarrassment on returning to her little world. To her it seemed so trivial and restricted that to take any of its opinions seriously would be weak. She faced the people cheerfully and kept a tight hand on her emotions. She was glad to be back and perfectly indifferent to any hidden animus her return created. Women found this out and men argued concerning her. Her own attitude influenced others and some said she was a brazen wanton and should be expelled from the parish, while others admired her

pluck and the way in which she chose to start living down her lapse.

When Ivy came home, she already knew that Linda was returned and took extreme interest in every particular of her daughter's adventure. Linda herself never spoke of the past again, but Verity related everything, and Ivy, noting her child's resolute attitude to life, chose to be shocked. Indeed, she complained to her mother-in-law and hinted more than once to Linda that a humble and contrite heart would better suit her situation.

'She don't seem to realise the fearfulness,' said Ivy to Granny Challice. 'The woman goes on with her life and takes all our mercy and forgiveness for granted and bears herself so brave as an unspotted virgin.'

'Yes,' answered Verity, 'she do, and I'll tell you for why if you can understand it. She carries on because she's got a mind and have ate of the Tree of Knowledge and learned to measure up truth. Only weak-headed folk make mountains out of mole-hills, and she ain't weak-headed if you are. I never cared a deuce of a lot about that. What I cared for was to think of her under the dominion of that murdering beast for evermore; but he set her free himself by good chance, and she got away all the wiser and not much the worse. That's how she looks at it and how I look at it. She'd got the bravery to fight through, and them that want to see her creeping about like a leper will be disappointed.'

Linda paid an early visit to Mr. Pye, sat with him an hour and told him everything. Her new outlook embraced him also and she found herself anxious indeed to make all clear to him, yet more or less indifferent as to how he might be pleased to take it. He was kind, however, and a curious thing happened, for, while no tear had fallen from her eyes before her own family, Simon summoned them. He showed

her his own attitude to the matter and she had wit to see it. He did not blame her, or dwell upon her story, but he indicated his profound sorrow for her father, and that touched her deeply. He said not a word concerning Gerald until Linda asked him whether he had written since her departure. Then he told her that he had done so.

‘He doubts not that you came home,’ said Simon. ‘He feels confident about that and says that I must not abate in my affection for either of you. He implies that the world will go on much as usual, despite your experience, and that you have the wit and strength of character to live down any archaic prejudices still lurking in rural districts. For me he declares the usual devotion and begs me to ask him down to Merton as soon as possible after certain great autumn races have been run. I have written to him and told him that I will never see his face again.’

‘If he was to come here, Mr. Pye, he mightn’t go again without an ambulance to take him,’ answered Linda. ‘They are what you might call old-fashioned round here. But he won’t come unless you suffer it.’

‘I shall not suffer it. It seems that killing with motor-cars is quite an everyday matter now and our laws, that would resent pistols, or poison, or what not, seldom regard such a weapon seriously. There is no safer tool than a car to exterminate your kind if so minded ; but should my son come here I shall charge him with attempting murder and I have told him so. As for me, I shall be leaving Merton before very long. I am becoming ill, Linda, and must live where I can receive attention. I shall go the more contented to know that you are with your father.’

‘I’ll never leave him as long as he lives, Mr. Pye.’

‘That is right and I know you mean it,’ said Simon. ‘You can do more to add to his happiness than anybody.’

He tells me that his affairs content him and that he is in a sound position, so I trust you may not leave home again. I shall see him regularly as long as I am here and keep in touch with you all.'

'Your going will cast him down a lot,' feared Linda.

'It will cast me down a lot too, my dear, but I have no choice. Come and see me sometimes. You will be welcome.'

So it stood with Simon, and when Richard Challice heard that he was actually leaving his country home, he expressed great sorrow.

'I've grown to feel he's a rock to be relied upon,' he said, 'and I tell him so ; but he won't have it. 'Tis him that brought our misfortunes upon us—so he says ; but I bid him think different. He ain't the first honest man who's got a rogue, and I'm so sorry for Mr. Pye as for myself, because there's no telling whether a killer like his son may not live to get his own thread cut soon or late—an awful thought for a father, that.'

Richard, however, was not long cast down. He developed a new cheerfulness in the home-coming of Linda and his mother rejoiced to see the difference that she had made. The stress of his situation and the growing scarcity of means only shadowed him occasionally and he continued full of sanguine predictions.

So Linda remained. And then happened a hard stroke which made the Challices forget all lesser problems. Granny fell ill and they learned that she had been sick for a long time but chosen to conceal the fact. At last she demanded to see Dr. Thorpe, and the news, that came as no surprise to her, brought deep concern for Richard and her grandchildren. At Verity's age an operation was not to be considered and they learned that she must die at no distant time. She held

on as long as possible and then kept to her room. She suffered very little pain and strove to cheer them with assurances that she had lived long enough and was ready to take leave.

Linda sat with her for many hours, sewing while Verity talked, or slept. Granny Challice insisted on saying 'good-bye' to old friends, and they came, one at a time, to take farewell. She was always cheerful and laughed at any show of sorrow.

'I'm finishing so easy as a dead tree,' she would say, 'without nothing much left to give me a pang or wake a groan. And who could wish for kinder fortune than that?'

Simon Pye called sometimes and left tobacco for Verity as long as she continued to smoke. He also brought her fruit of which she was very fond. Then she sent him a message by Richard and wondered if he might feel equal to coming once again and 'having a last tell,' as she put it. He did so, and the afternoon came on a clear, soft day nearing Christmas. Simon's own plans had been made ere now and he was going to live at Bournemouth for the winter and possibly remain there if the place suited his health.

He came with some fine pears and a big bunch of grapes, and after he had saluted her, and expressed his pleasure at seeing her again, he looked out of her little window and was surprised to note the exceeding propinquity of the churchyard. So near it lay that the grave-stones might be read, and the name of Challice appeared on many of them. Granny wore her black indoor cap over a head nearly bald and she was wrapped in a big red shawl. He marked that she was grown very thin and shadowy, but still a cheerful expression and the old vivacity sat upon her face.

'My, Verity!' said Simon, 'you're near the sleeping

people this side of your house ; but you wouldn't mind that much.'

'No,' she said. 'I've neighboured with 'em over forty years, Master, and never had a sharp word from one of 'em. 'Tis the live folk have troubled me, not them peaceful ones down there. I look out upon 'em and know to a grass-blade where I shall join up—a very restful thought.'

'I can well imagine it might be,' said Mr. Pye. 'But plenty of time for that.'

He found her mind wandering, yet it wandered among the things he liked to hear. The ancient superstitions drifted through it and she was concerned more with the past than the present. She uttered old scraps of dead lore, yet associated them with him.

'You're an understanding man as I've always found you to be,' she said, 'and I beg when by chance you go mushroom gathering of an early morning you'll always leave the bestest one for the fairies. They laugh at fairy folk now, yet my own father saw 'em. Coming home from a revel to the caravans on Honiton Heath, Sam Tarleton—that was my father—saw 'em dancing in a ring, and a white hare sitting up in the midst of 'em.'

'A great adventure for him, Verity.'

'It was then ; and him a man never known to tell a lie—in drink or out.'

Simon tried to bring the talk to herself and her son, but her family did not interest Granny at this last meeting with Mr. Pye.

He spoke of Linda to praise her pluck, and so reminded Verity of her own recent direction to her granddaughter.

'I was commanding the child but yesterday,' she said. '"I may be here, or I may not be here come Christmas, Linda," I told her, "but if I'm gone, bear in mind to take

down the holly-berries on New Year's Day and give 'em to the birds." A thing few think to do, but very full of good luck for them that do it. One of they dark mysteries most forgot.'

Then suddenly she became personal and made Mr. Pye feel moved.

'Come closer to me, Master, and hold my hand,' she said. 'Tis ugly, but no matter for that. Never a very comely hand. I was behind the door when good looks was given out, but beauty's only skin-deep and my husband found me all he could wish.'

'I'm sure he did, my old dear,' said Simon. He patted her hand, and she said 'Thank you' and drew it back again under her shawl.

He told her presently that he was about to go away.

'I'm sick, too,' he said, 'and Thorpe tells me I'll do well to winter by the sea, Verity.'

'So I've heard from Dick, and very sorry I was to know it, Master; but you're young yet and must think on yourself. Good people are scarcer than they was. Everything good is scarcer than what it was. Milk ain't what it was.'

'If all's well with me I'm hopeful to come back in the spring,' he told her. 'I'd like to think I'd see another spring and summer here beside the river.'

He would not say 'good-bye' and promised to call again if she could see him. Then he left her and had speech with Richard, who waited below.

'A great many interesting things will be forgotten when your mother passes, Richard,' said Simon. 'It is hard to believe that she is so ill, but I think that it gave her a little pleasure to see me.'

'Did she tell you what she wanted, Master?' asked Dick.

'She did, and I hope to pleasure her in that little matter.'

‘It won’t be long. We’re praying she’ll just drift out in her sleep one night. It’s hard to think she’s so near it. But if she hangs fire overmuch, you mustn’t bide, because of your health.’

‘I still hope to see her once again,’ said Mr. Pye. Then he went his way.

XIX.

DEPARTURES.

Simon did not see his ancient friend again, for a week later she ceased to take food and a morning came when Linda found that Verity had died, as her son hoped she might, in sleep. Simon kept his promise, attended the funeral and walked beside the few mourners to the grave. His wreath lay upon the coffin, and Susan Mingo judged that it had cost not less than a sovereign. ‘They boughten flowers call for money,’ she said, ‘because they’ve been fetched up under glass.’

Beside her spouse lay Granny Challice, and the wreaths were set upon her grave with a great wreath of holly that Leonard had twisted for her. Richard wept at the grave-side and Leonard wept, but the rest of the family shed no tears. They were clad in black and Ivy wore a black veil which concealed her calm.

Dick spoke to Mr. Pye when the ceremony was ended. He was much moved and uttered the first thing that came into his mind.

‘They counted her for a difficult woman in the parish, Master; but she was always straight,’ he said.

‘Probably just for that reason she proved difficult, Richard,’ answered Mr. Pye. ‘I never found her difficult.’

A splendid old person in my opinion, and I fear you will greatly miss her.'

'For evermore, sir. 'Tis a gap that time's powerless to fill, because we understood each other in a way seldom given to mother and son.'

Simon took a kindly farewell of the family three days later. He bade Linda keep him informed of her father's health and uttered hopes to return for a season when another summer should come. The thought cheered Richard and he felt it a link with Mr. Pye that 'Prospect Place' should be left under his charge. Ever sanguine, he felt little doubt that Simon would return when the swallows did.

Leonard was a trouble at the turn of the year, for he had earned dismissal from his work and in no honourable fashion. The boy disgraced himself, helped poachers, was found out and instantly discharged. For the sake of his father he had not been locked up, but he now lived a very twilight life, condemned by the virtuous and laughed at for his stupidity by the rest. Other difficulties, though none so poignant, waited on Richard at the turn of the year. It proved a bad winter with very little work at the smithy and he became slowly conscious of his problems. Increasing thrift at home needed to be practised, and Ivy wore her martyr's crown openly before the public. Dick missed his mother, too, and often uttered a wish that she was back again and a conviction that she would quickly have found a way to solve their problems.

'You never listened to her enough, my dear,' he said to his wife. 'I've often marked how she would have thrown light for you, if you'd but let her.'

'Oh my God,' said Ivy to herself when he had left her. 'How long? How long?'

But she never answered Richard or spoke a harsh word to

anybody. She was trying to find work for Leonard at this season and urging him to seek employment in the city. But Leonard declined, because he said that to live among houses would kill him. He turned his hand to making clothes pegs, cut osiers from Withy Platt and wove baskets. It was the gipsy in him, and in secret he sometimes thought to vanish from home and join up with the wanderers. Once indeed he fell in with a camp and asked if he might throw in his lot with them ; but he had nothing to bring and they did not want him. He kept that adventure even from Samson.

There came a letter from Simon in late March. He reported that his health was a little better and sent ten pounds for Granny Challice's grave-stone. ' You must let me have the pleasure of raising a seemly memorial to your grandmother,' he wrote to Linda. ' She was a valued friend and I shall take it kindly if your father will choose what he may think fitting.'

Linda devoted herself to her father, and marked in time that while his intelligence did not increase, his happiness returned. He was very well, hearty, full of life and he declared a conviction that the spring would see an improvement in his affairs. For a time he gave up going to ' The Cat and Fiddle ' ; but he missed this solitary pleasure so much that it was planned he should continue to go. His daughter devoted herself to Richard and his wife was well content that she should concentrate upon him, cook his food, look after his clothes and attend him when he wanted her. Ivy's energies embraced her sons, and Richard did not seem to realise how she had slipped out of his own life. They lived in perfect amity, all under a common dread of the future, and Challice often puzzled to know why none shared his confidence. But with Verity's death few hard words ever passed among them.

Like Leonard, Linda experienced a private adventure at this season and, like him, she kept it to herself. She possessed far more strength of will and character than the rest of her family and her mind was much on how to mend the situation, but as yet she could not see a way. Debts mounted and the patience of certain creditors began to fail. Then Linda received a registered letter and knew the writing very well. It was a solid, bulky missive from Gerald Pye. Linda came down first on a morning and began the day's work by lighting the fire. As soon as it was aflame on this particular occasion she put her letter into it unopened ; then she made a cup of tea for Richard as usual and took it to his bedside, where he slept in a room off the house place. She guessed, however, that the existence of the letter would not have escaped either the post-mistress or postman ; and it was so, for two days later her mother spoke to Linda concerning it. Ivy had heard of the communication from Miss Mingo, for Susan was full of it, and when next they met she touched the subject in her tactful way. After the customer had bought a cake of carbolic soap and praised the weather, she spoke.

'I know my place better than to speak about what don't concern me,' she said, 'but, as your life-long friend, of course everything to your betterment I do and think upon, Ivy. And duty's duty, and I hold it my duty to tell you that Linda got a letter two mornings ago from him ; and by "him," needless to tell you, I mean that man we was all so sadly mistook about. We well know as he won't come it over her again ; but being her mother, I feel called to tell you he wrote. Registered it was.'

'First I've heard of it,' said Ivy.

'Then don't you name it, my dear, because her finger would point to me. For your ear alone it is.'

'Nothing came to my ear anyway. I wonder, now, how

he had the face,' answered Linda's mother. 'It might be that his conscience has pricked him, Susan, and he knows his loss by this time and wants to make her an honest woman.'

'Very unlikely, I'm afraid, though just a high-minded thought you'd think, I'm sure,' replied Miss Mingo. 'The young have got no conscience in my experience. Conscience is dying out of the human race I'd say.'

'Be it as it will, she'd never go back to him. Not so much for what he done to her, but what he done to her father,' explained Ivy.

'Think no more of it. She's Richard's right hand now, so he tells me, and yours too, I hope.'

'A wilful piece, though she's got a mind,' admitted Mrs. Challice; but despite Susan's plea she did question Linda, though not directly.

'I wonder sometimes why that rogue never wrote to you again,' she said on a day when they were alone. 'If it was only to tell his grief and shame and pray for our forgiveness, he might have done that much. A decent man would have looked to your future and felt himself under proper obligations that you should never want so long as you live.'

Linda laughed.

'Since when did you come to think that him who tried to kill your husband might be a decent man, Mother?' she asked. 'Everybody's so up in the air about what he did to me that they don't seem to mind what he did to Father. That's what showed what he was. I had a fat, registered letter from him only a bit ago.'

'You might have named it then. What did he dare to tell you, Linda?'

'I couldn't say,' she answered. 'I burnt the thing without opening it.'

Ivy stared.

'I wouldn't say that was fair to the young man, if you ask me,' she said. 'There may have been money in it, Linda.'

'Quite likely, I should think, if he's had a stroke of luck.'

'Money's money—not that I'd have had you touch his, I'm sure.'

'Then we agree for once, Mother ; and you can tell Miss Mingo not to open her mouth so wide about other people's business.'

'Did you name it to your father ?'

'I did not, and I beg you won't. I never bring that man into his mind if I can help it.'

Winter went its way and, when spring returned, Richard bade Linda write to Mr. Pye and give him a long account of his property.

'You can tell him all's well with the house and grounds,' he said. 'You'll need to break to him there won't be the blooth in his orchard I'd counted upon, but you must be mindful to explain that it was no fault of mine. Tell him there's promise of fruit none the less and twenty-three of his young trees are offering to blossom very nice. And you can say that we're mighty wishful to see him if so be he's got the nature in him to come.'

She wrote and Simon answered. He was not able to visit Merton and his health still troubled him.

Dick shook his head when he read the letter.

'His writing's gone weak,' he said. 'I'm afeared the sickness be crawling down his arms into his hands, Linda. He took to drinking lations of raw lemon juice last summer and I dare say it have turned on him, dear man.'

(To be continued.)

THE MOON-GHOST.

*Fantastic moonlight floods the ghostly hall,
The clock ticks on with dim and hollow sound ;
The midnight chimes ring out, and all around
Great silence spreads the shadow of its pall.*

*No sound within, no sound without—the air
Is coldly still ; but suddenly, close by,
The leaves about the lattice seem to sigh,
As if a something stirred the ivy there :*

*A breath that faintly flares and fades, no more,
A shy, slight motion, trembling tinily,
The murmur of a moment's mystery,
As if some presence pausing at the door,*

*Sighed, and passed on ; but yet nor beast nor bird
With startled voice betrays the secret night,
No rabbit flashes from the pathway bright,
No creature moves, and not a cry is heard.*

*Only Orion trembling in the sky,
Only the pine-tree lifting gaunt and tall
Above the starry pool ; and over all
The moon in frosted fulness flowing by !*

*A glorious galleon with a glittering trail,
Streaming her fleece-foamed course above the wrack,
While some star-pinnacle flying at her back
Flutters a pennant to her silver sail !*

*But stay ! Who moved just now upon the path ?
No footstep sounds, nor is there shadow dark
To show his way : the listener fans a spark
To kindle comfort from the dying hearth.*

*It is the moon-ghost : when the moon doth show
Her round, full face, about the countryside
The harmless spirit wanders far and wide,
Nor ever rests until her orb sinks low.*

*There is a knowledge that his presence brings—
A sense, a feeling when he passes near :
A far, faint sound that strikes the watchful ear
As of a breeze that wakens drowsy things :*

*A whisper that goes sighing through the trees,
A ripple running lightly on the grass,
A branch that bends as if to let him pass—
Thus is his spirit felt, in one of these.*

*Onward he goes now, roaming at his will
Along the highroad, down the shaded lane :
Stays but to watch, to hear, then on again
Across the field and up the high, bright hill.*

*The splendid stallion on his bracken bed,
His great hide taut and twitching in a dream
Of chariots leaping to a phantom team—
Hears not without the moon-ghost's airy tread.*

*The silent cattle munching in their stall
Fix their slow thoughts with wide, reproachful stare
Of dark eyes deep and dreaming—unaware
Of reedy rustling faint beyond the wall.*

*The mongrel sleeps with light, uneasy snore,
Chained to his kennel in a curled cocoon,
Who howled a welcome to the waking moon
From that same kennel scarce an hour before.*

*The moon-ghost passes on his noiseless way
And starts no babbling tongue of loud alarm :
Peace lies untroubled on the weary farm
Yet some sweet hours before the glare of day.*

*On to the forest huge in ghostly shade—
No brittle twig betrays his roving feet,
No levret scuttles to a dim retreat,
No shambling badger hurries from the glade.*

*Leaping and coiling like a wisp of wire
The small sharp weasel chatters at his play :
The heedless dog-fox prowls his eager way,
A lean dark shadow swift with hungry fire.*

*The nightjar tumbles from the thicket deep,
A grotesque shadow flitting through the furze,
Bat-like she wheels, and in her flight she purrs
So faint she scarce disturbs the lightest sleep.*

*The owl breaks silence with a loud to-whooh,
His round eyes blink upon the midnight dim,
No laughing echo leaps to challenge him—
Unheard, unseen, the moon-ghost passes through.*

*Through to the fields and past the secret pond
In whose deep darkness dreams the impassive pike :
The bullfrog sports and splashes in the dyke
Twisting and glittering through the marsh beyond.*

*On, on he goes for many a tireless mile,
Untouched, untroubled in his journeying,
Joyful, exultant in each separate thing,
Sight, scent, or sound : and slowly all the while*

*His mistress moon sinks down ; till, far away,
When from the East the first soft shadow breaks,
On his dim perch the red-eyed rooster wakes
And flings a crazy challenge to the day !*

JULIAN TENNYSON.

SOLITUDE.

I.

*On a peak the poet stands,
Lonely, all alone,
On his face the winds of Heaven,
In his heart a stone.*

II.

*Ever nearer to the clouds
Further he from men,
And his wealth is fairy gold
Dug by dreaming pen.*

III.

*Cold, ah, cold the mountain's crest
Fields and flowers above,
Green the valley's warmth below—
And its name is Love.*

GORELL.

OUR CHILDREN AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL.

BY IRENE M. IRONSIDE.

THIS article is written for two main reasons : first, because many parents frequently say that they know nothing about modern education, and do not know whether their children are being taught rightly or wrongly ; secondly, because in spite of all that is written and said about education, far too many schools still exist where teaching is on uneducational lines, and children learn lessons without gaining culture or mind training—where, in fact, the teacher teaches but the children remain untaught. For the young child it is all important that it should start rightly. One does not wish the child at any point in its school career to have to submit to bad teaching, but the older boy or girl can the better react to bad teaching if a good start has been assured.

There seems to be, at the moment, a swing back of the pendulum to old-fashioned methods ; and this can be accounted for by the desire of parents that their children should pass school certificate at a certain age, which age is in many cases too young. The old methods, for many, still hold sway, and give a sense of security to those who have no educational standards for their children.

This retrograde movement is even affecting some of the work of teachers' training colleges ; and so the trouble is aggravated, and these teachers demand a certain type of school book which the publishers produce ; but the best type of teaching cannot be procured from a book—the right spirit of teaching cannot be bought even at an educational publishers !

What actually should the parents demand of the school, and what should the school try to give ?

We hear frequently that education should be training for life ; and so it should be, but not life in the dim future when school days are over—but training for life at the moment. It should mean a complete satisfaction for the child's mental, moral and physical activities resulting in a deep contentment ; in fact education should mean training in contentment. The habit of contentment of spirit should stay with the child throughout its school days and then it would be fitted to meet the changes and cross accidents of life. How many are there who could say that their school days gave them this satisfaction ? How can we aim at developing this sense of contentment in our children ? I would say broadly through *disciplined freedom and interested concentration*. I will try to discuss this matter under the two headings, but the ideas necessarily cross and re-cross.

Disciplined Freedom, especially as regards contentment. I do not consider that complete freedom for the child will produce this result. On the contrary, I am convinced that the happiest children are those who are disciplined ; and much havoc is being wrought in giving license to small children who are quite unfitted for it, in many cases owing to their training in babyhood ; for during this century a system of discipline for infants from the moment they are born has come into force, and during the first eighteen months or two years the child's life is regulated to the minute, and food measured to the drop. How can a child reared thus be contented and happy with life in the home or the school, where all decisions depend upon its unpractised judgment ?

Some parents are too afraid of using a stern word of command lest they alienate their child, not realising that

when severity is shown where great love dwells, nothing but respect can be engendered on the part of the child. There has been too much fear in parents as to whether severity will weaken the child's individuality, forgetting that they also are individuals, and that a balance must be kept if sanity is to prevail, and the child, in its turn, taught to respect its parents as individuals.

The same holds good in the question of obedience. If a child is not trained to be able to obey, without explanation, the parent whom it loves, are we not withholding from it the very foundation on which all faith may be built? Discipline, then, must have its place in the upbringing of the child.

Where are we to find the happy mean between the rigorous discipline of the Victorian Age, which allowed of no questioning of authority and frequently alienated the child from the parent, and the 'do-as-you-please' freedom of to-day, which is an attempt to establish a feeling of friendship between the adult and the child? Broadly I think we can put our orders to the children in two categories: (i) those commands which involve a moral decision—where it is quite possible the child might have a moral reason for disobeying, however well intentioned the parent, and (ii) the commands which are, as it were, the rule of the road. 'Stand away from the fire'—'Wash your hands'—'Take off your wet stockings,' etc.

Now it is easy to see that when the child is tiny it is the orders of 'Rule of the Road' which are mostly in evidence; but as he grows older and his spiritual side develops, the orders gradually change to those involving moral or ethical decisions, till eventually the time arrives when no further ordering is needed, but only reasonable discussion.

Something is wrong with our handling of the children

when at the age of three or four years anything that goes wrong is termed by these babies as 'naughty'; and yet one does see how this arises, for one of the most common questions asked by nurses when they fetch the child from school or party is: 'Has she been good?' as though one could discuss this question over the child's head on the doorstep. In any case, children should not be subject to the indignity of being drawn into the limelight on account of error.

Two children, A and B, were playing with bricks in my sitting-room. A had made a building when B seized some of her bricks. A looked furious. 'You should not have taken A's bricks,' I said. 'Why shouldn't I?' asked B. 'Look at A's face,' I said. B did so. 'Oh, I see,' she said. 'I'm sorry.' This kind of consideration and thought about right and wrong conduct is, I feel sure, the initial foundation on which to build a true League of Nations. It is only in the heart and mind of each individual child that this foundation can be laid, and it is the work of the home and the school to lay it.

There is no use arguing with children when they are fussed and angry, for then profitable discussion is impossible—far better to be absolutely silent and, if necessary, deal with the offender by putting him from the room. Then, at some later time when the child is quite itself again and in happy mood, talk to it about its behaviour—its lack of self-control or whatever it may be—and suggest to it that another time it should be more sensible and controlled.

Parents sometimes see their children go through a difficult phase, and once it is over feel that their child has left his difficulty behind, failing to realise that all growth means struggle, and that often a child copes with one difficulty only to be faced by another. It is the parent who can deal

with its child reasonably and sanely during the difficult years who will retain its love and respect in the years to come. It is more or less ordained that small boys shall leave home at about the age of nine ; with our girls, however, this banishment might be avoided ; but unfortunately too many mothers, on meeting with difficulties in their daughters, shelve the responsibility and privilege of helping them cope with their faults, and banish them to boarding-school. The uneven fight is given up by the parent ; but the daughter and her teachers have to continue the struggle.

She must be sent to boarding-school 'to find her own level.' How often do we hear this said ? I wonder how many people ever analyse this phrase ? If they would just think about it they will realise that it is anything but her own level she is allowed to find—the word level is so damning—what she finds is just the level of those whose characters are weak enough to be brought into line.

The schools are becoming too big and the tendency is to turn out a type, the result of mass production. Boarding-school girls, especially, are suffering from being segregated with those of their own age and sex, having no intercourse with men and boys except in the holidays, when life is very often not ordinary family life ; and they may be away on holiday and not in their own homes. What girl of to-day, too, knows anything of nursery life, or sees the care of little children and babies ?

The modern girl knows little of home life until she marries, and is expected to make a home of her own, and *or* her own.

It is most noticeable that in these days children rarely play with dolls, but love some toy animal. The cause of this is not difficult to find. There are few babies in the homes, and children do not see the tending and care of

infants—but in so many homes to-day the children do see dogs treated with almost the same care as would be given to a child, and certainly they are addressed as lovingly. The child as a result turns to toy animals, not to dolls, for a little child's play is purely imitative. 'I have eight Teddy Bears and two dolls,' said a child to me the other day, 'but I cannot take to the dolls.'

The craft of motherhood is dying out, and I think that the schools must provide for its training. Just as we see in almost every school nowadays the domestic training course, so I hope in the future we shall see the mothercraft training course. Why not have a crèche or babies' welfare centre attached to every girls' school? You may say that in the boarding-schools the prefects have to look after the younger children; but this is not satisfactory, for the attitude of one to the other is artificial and much can be said against it. No—it is the tiny child who must be cared for by the seniors.

In a day school to which many tinies come, the school should try and help the homes and give opportunity for girls of all ages to mix freely with one another, and for the big girls to have some work with the little children. This has been arranged for successfully in some schools, and both big girls and little children benefit greatly by this natural intercourse.

The more natural the atmosphere of the school can be kept, the better. In a natural atmosphere unhealthy adorations do not flourish and girls do not pass through 'giggling' phases. The moment behaviour becomes silly, you may be sure that there is a wrong sense of proportion somewhere, and healthy humour is being withheld.

In order to maintain a natural intercourse between teacher and pupil, every child should be allowed to address the

teacher by her surname or her Christian name. On occasion this custom has been criticised by parents who ask—‘Does not this lead to lack of respect?’ Respect engendered by the use of a surname can only be superficial, and the use of a surname to the face almost invariably means the use of a nickname, usually a derogatory one, behind the back. No—if we are worthy of the respect of our children we shall be given it. The matter lies in our own hands.

During the early years the child passes through physical changes which frequently manifest themselves in unwonted behaviour—behaviour which may have much or little significance, and which may vary from little faults to real wrong-doing, such as stealing. The right treatment here is vitally important; they must not be ignored; pretending not to see what the child knows is perfectly obvious would be dishonest on the part of those in charge. Nor must they be dealt with as though they were serious crimes, as the child himself, while passing through these phases, often loses moral balance; and therefore to him the fault may not appear the grave wrong-doing which it does to the adult mind.

I believe that every child to-day, whether easy to manage or difficult, should be given more quiet and solitude to find his own peace and to give time for spiritual growth. The over-full curriculum and the demands of parents in their attempt to make their children efficient (!) makes it almost impossible to secure that background of repose which seems to be a condition of all growth, mental, moral and physical.

In a private school started many years ago the organiser made the hours of work much shorter than they are to-day, but she discovered that in consequence the children were being given outside classes to fill up the time, and so the end which she had in view for the child, which was leisure, was defeated and she was obliged to lengthen the school

hours. This action was, at least, preventing the scattering of interests and the weakening of loyalties. For young children should concentrate their loyalties as far as possible in one school and, further, should not come under the jurisdiction of too many different authorities in one day.

In the boarding-school there is even less opportunity for this solitariness and leisure ; and children have actually told me how tiring it is never to be alone, to think one's own thoughts or carry out one's own ideas. The fact that children mention it shows how great is the need, for children rarely voice their own abstract wants. It is necessary to make quiet spaces in life if we would understand its true aim. When the divinity in man was revealed to man it was to the quiet watchers in the stillness of the night that the glory broke. More care is needed in these days of rush to leave the child when he is deeply absorbed, and not to break into his reverie. How many parents realise how much more deeply happy a child may be when quietly playing with his bricks in the nursery than when apprehensively watching a clown or a conjurer at a party in a crowded drawing-room ?

A mother once complained to me of her child, who in the holidays frequently left her brothers and sisters and betook herself to the woods, and walked alone. Yes, even a child realises that it requires some rest other than the rest of sleep ; and parents, far from discouraging these times, should definitely arrange for them if the child does not do so of its own accord.

Those of you who have heard that great educator Herr Kurt Hahn speak will recollect what stress he lays on aloneness, how his seniors who are in responsible positions have to be alone for two hours every Sunday.

Naturally with little children we must act with caution ; for some children, even if they have been left much alone

as babies, may suddenly develop a fear of being solitary. I suppose that many of us can remember the unreasoning fear that seized us as children when we lay in bed alone, and imagined that everyone else had left the house. These cases must be dealt with individually and reasonably, and can soon be quietened.

The child's spiritual stature increases when it is alone and at peace, without any adult influence infringing on its solitariness.

Professor Whithead in his book, *Religion in the Making*, writes :

‘Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness . . . and if you are never solitary, you are never religious . . . the great religious conceptions which haunt the imagination of civilised mankind are scenes of solitariness ; Prometheus chained to his rock, Mahomet brooding in the desert, the meditation of Buddha, the Solitary Man on the Cross. It belongs to the depth of the religious spirit to have felt forsaken, even by God.’

Interested Concentration.—We must see to it that from the beginning of its days every child knows it has its appointed service. ‘We cheat every child of his true happiness if we do not help him to render faithful service with all the force of his manhood's disciplined strength.’ (*Times*.) How can we arrive at this rendering of faithful service ? To start with, the child must be allowed to be himself. The initial urge in the child must have free play. Parents to-day are seeking happiness for their children by making and expecting them to enjoy the same things as they do themselves. Because a father enjoys shooting birds, or visiting old buildings or playing cricket on his holiday, or a mother finds her time pass happily in dancing or in gardening, there is no reason to believe that their children need necessarily draw

their pleasure from the same sources. Frequently they do, and life may go fairly easily, but the real art of living is shown when each member of the family can follow its own tastes and still remain in perfect fellowship with all the rest.

When children are forced into channels where some outside power presses them, instead of their own inclinations, they either succumb and gain a spurious happiness and become conventional beings, or frequently become ill, the illness being a subconscious gesture against the outside force. I have seen numbers of cases of this kind in young girls forced into society unwillingly. It is the good and tractable children who mostly suffer in this way, being unable to withstand the reply to any protest on their part. 'No, darling, of course you need not, but I would love you to.' This appeal through the affections is iniquitous and leads to most unhappy results. Far better the neglected child than the one who is forced in the wrong direction by such methods.

The school must co-operate with the parent in helping to establish a deep contentment in the child. For this reason parents should go and see a school at work before precipitating their child into it. It may be that in its home it is still learning something which the school cannot give. It is becoming more and more the fashion to send the child to school at a very early age (two and a half to three years), and this may be essential where the home cannot possibly supply the child's needs and give it proper training. Unfortunately people do not discriminate, and children while quite tiny and still perfectly contented are uprooted and sent to an infant school because it is the fashion.

Before deciding on the school, parents should feel that they have absolute confidence in the head master or mistress; they must be in such a relationship to the head that they feel

they can tell him anything about their child, for parents and teachers should work together if the child is to benefit to the full. I have known parents who do not tell their children's faults and difficulties to the head teacher, thinking that he may be biassed towards the child. If this is the case, then the parents have chosen the wrong teacher and the child ought to be sent elsewhere to school.

The child having been sent to school, it is necessary to watch its reactions. One frequently hears from parents that the child will never say what it is doing at school, for when questioned it gives the laconic and horrifying (!) reply : ' Playing.' Usually one finds that on their return from school these children are greeted with the question : ' Well, what have you been doing at school to-day ? ' Now many children find it extremely difficult to express themselves fluently in words, and presumably, if it is a good school, part of the morning's work has been verbal expression : it is obvious, then, that when the child goes home he cannot be bothered with what seem to him futile questions. Spontaneous conversation on any subject he fancies is the recreation he requires, or else he should relapse into silence which ought to be respected. The correct method for parents to pursue is to find out from form teachers the subjects of the curriculum and to introduce these subjects into conversation from another angle and then see if the child responds, and, if so, whether with intelligence and interest.

If a child is truly interested in its lessons it will develop the power of concentration—the power which later in life will help it to concentrate, if necessary, on that work which it does not like. With the little child, interest must come first—you cannot concentrate without it. Then we must remember that the young child cannot concentrate on one thing for very long at a time. This fact distresses some

parents, but it need not do so. The power will grow in the same way as the child grows physically—if given proper care and environment. A little child's first efforts at concentration are usually on some job it is doing—and wherever possible this concentration should not be interrupted. He wants to put on his own socks and shoes—then let him do so, and do not interrupt his efforts ; too frequently we are in a hurry, and seize the sock and shoe from the child and put them on him ourselves and concentration is interrupted. I know that children are slow ; we cannot always wait ; in that case it is better to say : ‘ To-day I will dress you,’ and do so without talk.

In the modern school concentration in the young children is trained by making their work connect with some central interest. A story is told on Monday, and the handwork, games, reading (if the children are already being taught reading) will all be centred on the events in the story. The story may be something quite simple ; a little girl living in a cottage feeding her pigeons, watering her garden, planting seeds, etc. During the week the children can make doves from paper, model pigeons to put round it—perhaps sing and play a ring game about pigeons—and for their nature work plant seeds ; and in various ways the central interest can be carried on and the imagination developed. In a later term we give a story long enough to continue from week to week, e.g. the childhood of Hiawatha, with parts of the poem learnt by the children. In its connection the children can act, using either their own or the actual words of the poem, or both. For handwork, bows and arrows can be made and the wigwam, each child doing some of the sewing and the painting of pictures on the outside. For the nature work, the children can have talks on the various animals and answer the questions which Hiawatha

had to answer : ' Why the rabbit was so timid,' ' How the reindeer ran so swiftly,' etc.

As the child grows older and becomes ready for the beginnings of history, he hears stories of primitive man and begins to think and reason and discover. The child at the age of seven is a primitive man and delights in his discoveries.

The description of a lesson on the evolution of pottery will illustrate this. Several vegetable marrows and many oyster shells were provided. The children halved the marrows and scooped out their contents with the shells. The next day the cups so made were dry, and the children found they held water ; then someone suggested heating the water, and the marrow was held over the fire—alas, a hole was burnt and the water began to drip through. A child suggested putting clay in the hole ; another went further and said ' Put clay all over it.' This was done, and then it was left to dry. The next morning the clay had dried, and the marrow slipped easily out of the clay cup. ' Why,' said one of the children, as primitive man said thousands of years ago, ' why, we need not have had a marrow at all, but might have made pots straight away in clay.'

And so the courses should continue, every child having means of expression through handwork or acting—spontaneous or written and learnt—or music or dancing, etc.

Expressive work even in the upper classes should take its place in the ordinary curriculum ; it should not be a handwork lesson taken in the afternoon as an extra—it must have its place in the time-table just as any other subject ; for without it, education is but onesided. And throughout the work there should be the idea of correlation. The first time the children go through the history of their own country, their literature, wherever possible, should be connected with it. For instance, in Edward III's reign we look at

England and London as they were then, and Chaucer walks into the picture. The age produced the man—the children must meet him for the first time in his correct setting. Such a system produces interest and such interest produces concentration.

People sometimes criticise modern teaching, saying it is made too interesting. No, if teaching is good the result will be that interest is immediately aroused. I was once talking to some young children about the food of plants and how the plant took in salts from the ground, and I continued: 'Sometimes you can actually see these salts—in the summertime if you split open a straw you can see the silica shining on the inside surface.' The following week a little boy said to me: 'I've seen the salts in the straw. I went to a party on Saturday and I had an iced drink and I split up my drinking straw.' Yes, the delights of the party and the iced drink had not quenched his interest!

A great weakness in the education of the young to-day, owing possibly to the very large numbers in classes, is the failure to train them to think clearly and express themselves accurately in speech. Stress is laid far too early on written work in exercise books. In life the majority of people have to express themselves through the spoken word; very few are called upon to write their thoughts. The bogy of school certificate and common entrance both depending upon written work, are the ruin of a true cultural education. But if teachers were brave enough they would find that these examinations can be passed by the child in its stride with far less expenditure of time on the written results than is usually given.

This fetish for the written word is carried to excess in some of the large public schools where, for instance, at their science lessons the girls in a fully equipped laboratory watch

the teacher do experiments instead of doing them for themselves ; consequently they make second-hand deductions, and lose the training in exactness and handwork which are surely some of the chief reasons for which the subject is taught. These girls are then required to write an account of the experiment which they *have not done* and very often give excellent written accounts. I consider this dishonest teaching, and a child's standard of truth is lowered by the principle of such a method.

To-day the desire of parents for their children to excel in examinations and in intellectual achievement is become an obsession and is blinding them to all true educational values. The mother who when asked how her boy was doing at school replied : ' He must be getting on well, for he has beaten J ' (a reputedly clever boy), is typical of a large number of parents who do not judge their child on his own merits and abilities, or on their own opinions, but simply by standardising him with the crowd. They forget that the failure to pass an examination may be made the opportunity of character training for life ; and that the child well equipped to meet its chances and changes, success and failures, is the one who can be considered well educated. He has to learn, as R. L. S. put it, ' Our business in this world is not to succeed, but to continue to fail in good spirits.'

And if our methods are right there must follow growth of character. It is taking place as surely as growth of body, and this unseen growth needs as much care and thought expended on it as physical growth. Little children are frequently sent to school to have a little employment or ' to do a few lessons,' and no enquiry is made as to the spirit of the school and what line is taken towards character training. Yet surely it is true that the trained intellect is of no value unless guided and controlled by character. Children

should not be taught lessons just anyhow—good teaching involves the arousing of the right attitude towards work, and this right attitude develops character ; the character of endurance. We cannot divorce the common events and happenings of daily life from the development of character. This leads me on to speak of the place of disappointment in the child's life. I do not think it well for any child to have repeated disappointments. But to-day we are afraid to let our children suffer disappointment. 'I have just heard that we cannot go to the Play to-day ; but the children will be so disappointed, I am taking them to the Zoo instead.' This type of thing is heard far too frequently, and the normal discipline of life is frustrated.

Loyalty—what loyalties have our modern children, what are they being taught to give in return for what they receive from the world ? Are they being trained to justify their existence ? On occasion it is suggested to a mother that the child might do something for the sake of the school which, after all, is its little world for the moment. The reply, alas too frequently, is 'I will ask her if she wants to,' not, 'I will suggest to her that she ought to.'

The school should stress the beautiful, the good and the true in people, and things, and ignore the ugly and harmful. Children should be encouraged to criticise kindly, and to appreciate the good qualities in their school fellows. We hope that our children will do great things in their day and generation, and the training of the appreciation of good will have fruition in the days to come. As a well-known preacher said recently : 'International troubles cannot be solved until each nation realises the excellencies of the others.'

Our homes should have their own standard—not necessarily the standards of everyone else's home. 'Mary will do this and that because Joan Smith does it,' is really no

reason for Mary's action. 'Is it good for Mary and everyone else concerned?' is the only thing that matters, and the only foundation on which to make our judgments. 'If people only wouldn't let their children,' is the common cry of many parents manifestly not approving. I know quite well the difficulty, for it is natural for the young to follow after the young; but I do also know that in homes where there is an ideal of living and a standard of integrity to this ideal maintained, the young *will* be guided—not by having these ideals and standards thrust upon them, but in seeing them from babyhood consistently lived.

We all want our children to be happy; and I cannot do better than conclude with a quotation from H. V. Nevin's *Running Accompaniments*.

'I fall back,' he says, 'nearly twenty-three centuries to the Greek Philosopher's definition of happiness as "the exercise of vital powers along the line of excellence in a life giving them scope." Energy, action, production—in the exercise of vital powers alone I am convinced can the highest happiness be reached.'

THE SOLILOQUY OF LI CHANG.

Green rushes by the waterside,
 Like spears of jade against a cloudless sky,
 And butterflies among the mulberries
 And tall wild pears.
 A thicket blazing in the noonday heat,
 Until, as afternoon wears on,
 The shadows lengthen in their harmony,
 Upon the water meadows.
 The setting sun : an evening star,
 And through the willows, shines the bright full moon
 Upon the winding CHÊN.
 Dusk, and the evening song of frogs,
 Then all the stars of heaven gazing down,
 A million 'li' away,
 On starry flowers clustered in their myriads,
 Beside the placid stream ;
 While in the utter quietude of night,
 The softest whisper of eternity
 Echoes with the voice of a thousand rivers.
 Stillness and peace and purity
 In sky and sea and mountain,
 In bird and leaf and dewdrop,
 And I, LI CHANG,
 Stand transfixed by loveliness,
 Yet sad that man must stand aside
 From all this sweet creation,
 Because he cannot follow purity
 For purity's sake.

R. CROSS.

MISS NOLAN.

BY SIR GEORGE LEVESON GOWER.

‘BEGOB ! an’ if anyone calls me a fool, he’ll no be that far wrong !’ cried Willie Walsh as he mopped his perspiring brow, after flinging himself into the railway carriage. Now the said Willie is not only very far from being a fool, but would have hotly resented the imputation. He was what is known in the South of Ireland as a ‘Guinea Man,’ and a very shrewd one at that. Now a Guinea Man is a gentleman who undertakes deals, mostly in horseflesh, on commission.

‘Why, what in the world has happened ?’ I asked.

‘I’ll be the laughin’-stock o’ County Cork !’

‘But how ?’

‘’Tis this way it came about, yer honour. I got a telegram from Captain Norman, out o’ Dublin, sayin’ “See Miss Nolan, at 16, Plunket Street, and find out if suitable.” An’ how the blazes was I to know ’twas a kitchen-maid Mrs. Norman would be wantin’ ! So off I goes to the house an’ raps at the dure. Out peeps an ould woman wid a face on her fit to scare the Divil out of hell. “Can I see Miss Nolan ?” I asks, just as civil as ye plaze. “That ye cannot.” “And for what no ?” “She’s out.” “Ah ! thin she’ll be exercisin’.” Slam ! went the dure !”’ Willie emphasised this by a vigorous whack of his rolled-up newspaper on the seat opposite him. “But when will she be back ?” I shouted through the kay-hole. “An’ what’s that to do wid ye, ye great spalpeen ?” “Sure I’m wantin’ to know if she’d be suitable.” “Divil take ye, ye ugly

blaygyard !” I saw a bit window open at the side of the dure, so slippin’ my head in I asked, soft as butter, “ Will she be in now ? I’m only wantin’ to see her paces, an’ take a peep into her mouth, an’ judge if she moves aisily ; an’ maybe ye’d not mind my throwin’ a leg over her ? ” At that the ould woman lets out a screech ye cud hear from here to Waterford, an’ bangs the window to.’ (Whack ! went the paper.) “ Will ye no shut your dirty mouth ? ” says she.—“ But there she comes, and she’ll be afther tellin’ ye herself ! ” an’ pointed down the street. Niver a smell of a filly in sight. “ But where’s Miss Nolan, thin ? ” I asks. “ There she comes, an’ ye’d better be shiftin’ yer dirty carcase before she hears the shameful things ye’ve been askin’ about her ! ” A great big lump of a girl comes straddlin’ down the street, an’ “ *There’s Miss Nolan !* ” screams the ould woman.’

Willie lapsed into silence and then burst out with sudden violence : “ ’Tis no prophet I am so as to know that the Captain was wantin’ a kitchen wench an’ no a filly. I’ll do a better deal in horseflesh for his Honour than anny guinea man in the County ; but as for kitchen wenches . . . ’

Words failed him to express the depth of his disgust, and he dejectedly spat on the floor.

FAIR ROSAMUND.

BY LLEWELYN POWYS.

THERE exists a tradition that Fair Rosamund, the lovely mistress of Henry II's affections, received her education at the Benedictine Nunnery at Cannington in Somerset. The tradition has been often challenged. It is rumoured that this 'pretty uplandish' village of Somerset at one time belonged to a manor held by the Clifford family. It is suggested that Henry knew Rosamund Clifford when, as a boy during the Civil War, his mother placed him not so far away at Bristol under the care of his uncle Robert, Earl of Gloucester. There are historians, however, who insist that he met her first at the age of sixteen, on the occasion of his visit to Scotland to receive a knighthood from his mother's uncle, King David I.

The dogrose of our fields, so fragile, fresh and fair, and with its delicate petals carrying upon them the flush of dawn, has often been taken as an emblem of the particular form of feminine beauty peculiar to English women—a beauty simple and innocent as milk and strawberries—and which, extremely provocative to foreigners, repeats itself from generation to generation in our cottages, vicarages and manor houses. It can hardly be doubted that Fair Rosamund represented a supreme example of this island beauty, the artless grace of which stirred Henry's dark and passionate nature to its depths—so far removed was it from his own experience and cynical judgment upon life.

On both sides Henry's heredity was wilful and turbulent. Richard Cœur de Lion used openly to jest about the family

hearsay that told how his Plantagenet great-grandmother—the dame of Fulk le Rechin—had had a demon for her lover—‘Is it to be wondered at,’ he would laugh, ‘that we live on bad terms with each other, springing as we do from such a stock? From Satan we sprang and to Satan we must go.’ We remember also how the Conqueror as a young man had the effrontery to thrash his future wife, Matilda of Flanders, in the streets of Bruges because she had added to her refusal of his marriage-proposal a taunting allusion to his mother Arlotta and his bastardry.

We are fortunate in possessing a very exact description of Henry II written down by a shrewd contemporary observer. With the help of this we can form a clear idea of this formidable and capable monarch. He was, so it appears, a man of medium height and of great physical strength. The measurement of his chest was enormous. He possessed untiring energy and is said never to have sat down except when at meals or in the saddle. His restless ways severely taxed the patience of his courtiers. Peter Blois provides us with this living picture of his early morning departures: ‘If the King has decided to spend the day anywhere . . . You may be certain that he will set off early in the morning and his sudden move will throw everyone’s plans into confusion. You may see men running about as though they were mad, urging on fresh horses, driving chariots one into another and everything in a state of confusion.’

From his imperious mother he had inherited an inordinate pride. Henry I, it will be recalled, only induced the Empress Maude to consent to her marriage with the Earl of Anjou by adopting stern disciplinary measures. And it was probably from the example of this overbearing ‘Lady of the English’ that Henry was taught to lay so great

a store on principalities and power. Without doubt it was this, his cardinal sin of ambition, that caused him to be won so easily by the blandishments of Eleanora, the Queen of France, who after sixteen years of married life had grown passing weary of Louis VII, with his shaven crown, and was openly looking round for a more vigorous companion for her royal bed.

This most unordinary woman, Countess of Poitiers, and Duchesse of Aquitaine in her own right, was already thirty-two years old at the time of her divorce. She was wedded to her new husband six weeks after the dissolution of her marriage with Louis when Henry was only nineteen years old. This brilliant voluptuous Queen brought to the young Plantagenet her 'great Provence dower.' True troubadour Princess that she was, she heightened every experience of her life with romantic adventures, fit subjects for the chanson or *tenson* of Provençal song. As a young girl, fired by the eloquence of Saint Bernard, she dressed up herself and her maids-of-honour to resemble Amazons and persuaded Louis VII to go crusading, hazarding during the unlucky campaign the love he had for her by a scandalous passion for a handsome Saracen Emir. Indeed, there was no end to the amorous mischief of this spoiled lady from gay Guienne. It is rumoured that her uncle Raymond of Poitou was bewitched by her at Antioch, as, indeed, Henry's own father was reported to have been, who for all that he was accustomed to wear so jocund a sprig of yellow in his cap seldom cared to risk the displeasure of his domineering Empress-wife, 'a niggard old wife,' as Camden without apology names her. Strange as it may sound, the Empress Maude's real life-passion seems to have been for her royal cousin and enemy, King Stephen; and when the young Henry, with the help of Eleanora's formidable fleet, sailed to England and

came to an affable agreement with King Stephen, there were not wanting those present at the Wallingford conference of pacification, to note that the Angevin Prince addressed the royal usurper as 'Father.' Henry and Eleanora were crowned at Westminster on December 19, 1154, 'after England had been without a king for six weeks.'

It appears that Henry at once adopted the plan of hiding Fair Rosamund in numerous dower houses in England, at Bishop's Waltham, Wynch, Freemantel, Martelstone, but especially at Woodstock :

*'Bowres hadde the Rosamunde about in Englonde,
Which this King for her sake made ich understonde,'*

sang Robert of Gloucester.

The royal residence at Woodstock had been particularly dear to Henry's grandfather, Henry I, and he had enclosed an enormous park there, building about it for the impalement of such a pleasure forest the finest stone wall ever put up in England. This vast wooded enclosure the Beauclerk used for the indulgence of his odd interest in zoology, filling its precincts, so it is recorded, with lions, leopards, and porcupines !

It must have been somewhere deep secluded in this dense preserve that his grandson mewed up his darling. She was, however, no strange Phoenix bird of a poet's imagination, but a beautiful girl out of Somerset, fresh and delicate as her namesake flower from the covert called Kiss-me-down that stands near by the grass-grown medieval roadway between Montacute and Tintinhull. Henry is believed to have had two sons by her, William Long Espec who helped to lay the foundation-stone of Salisbury Cathedral and was created Earl of Salisbury, and Geoffrey who became Bishop of Lincoln. Throughout the military turmoils of those un-

settled years both of these men remained faithful to their family, to their father as long as he lived, and afterwards to their two half-brothers. Geoffrey, indeed, was present at Henry's death-bed and watched him turn to the wall with a face convulsed with fury, muttering the famous words, 'Shame, shame upon a conquered king.' It was to William Espee that Henry is reported to have said, 'Thou art my legitimate son, the rest are bastards,' words which have been taken to prove that he had actually been married to Rosamund by some hedge-priest when yet a boy.

Tradition, legend, rumour and history all seem to indicate that the sylvan lodging that Henry built for Rosamund at Woodstock was most subtly contrived. Henry understood English if he did not speak it, and it is probable that he instructed some trusty Saxon woodsman to build winter-parlour and summer-parlour in the most sequestered glade of Woodstock Park. Some have conceived this flowery cell to have been placed at the centre of a maze whose cringle-crangle paths were calculated to confuse all heads save the King's, who because of his besotted case was drawn hot-foot to take the right turnings. Henry's emotional entanglement certainly called for cunning expedients. His haughty luxurious wife was not a woman to be easily gulled, nor one to endure personal humiliations lightly, and we can well understand how sharply Henry was put to his shifts when we recollect that Queen Eleanor liked the King's Oxford palace of Beau Monte well enough to lie in there for the birth of Richard Cœur de Lion.

Rosamund's bower of *jouissance* is described thus by an old chronicler : 'It was a house of wonderful working ; so that no man or woman might come to her but he that was instructed by the King, or such as were right secret with him touching the matter. . . . This house was named

Labyrinthus or Dedalus worke, which was wrought like unto a knot in a garden called a maze.'

It was there in such a sphere of delice that Fair Rosamund spent her indolent hours embroidering fine fabrics and idling for the visits of her royal paramour. Henry II, the vigorous man of affairs, mortised in reality, possessed, when he wished to display it, great personal charm, and it was doubtless this strange power, shining out through so coarse and bold a husk, that enabled him to win such a passionate devotion from the daughter of Walter de Clifford—a devotion of so pure and strong a kind that the tender conscience of the lady seems to have been absolved from all sense of guilt for her advoutry. Not even towards the close of her life when surrounded by the sanctity of a nunnery could she be made to confess that the love which had existed between herself and her royal master had been a matter of wrongdoing.

Shut away in her leafy cabin, she had been content to wait patiently for Henry's visits. The long weeks would pass by, and then suddenly the two lovers would be once more together in the springtime, when the first primroses were coming out in clusters under the huge tree-trunks, and in her yard the 'nopes,' or bullfinches, were pilfering the buds of the fruit trees during lengthening evenings light as air and happy with the laughter of children and the distant echoes of a workman's axe. And again they would be together in the soft days of early June, with whitethroats rearing their nestlings in the bramble patch behind her well ('Hir body wessh with watir of a welle') and with wood-pigeons blessing relaxed hours of delight, their murmur dying down and reviving hour after hour from their dizzy habitations of thick enfoliated king oaks from which no branch had ever been pollarded larger than a stag could with ease turn over with his horns. The lagging moons of

autumn would follow each other while she waited in her smoke-filled chamber—with the rushes ‘lifting’ on the floor in the draughts, and the rain lashing against the timbered wall of her room ; until, when least expected, she would suddenly hear his bridle ring, and before she could reach the yard her gag-tooth Saxon varlet would already be leading off the King’s horse.

*‘ And whan he rode, men might his bridel here
Jyngle in a whistlyng wynd so cleere,
And eek as loude as doth—the chapel belle.’*

Then in an instant all her past teen would be forgot. The winds of Woden at cock-shut time might go huffling along Akeman Street and across the marshlands of Evenlode, she cared for them not a jot. Speechless with joy they would once more be alone together, the violent man with ‘lyonous visage’ not less tormented than the trembling girl by an ardent desire to reach to an absolute ineffable unity, an absolute identification of being through the wild ways of the flesh. Careless of his appearance ‘this huge lover of woods’ would present himself dressed in his short coat smelling of autumnal leaves, of the moss and of the mould forest and of the black sweat of the embost stag he had just come from killing. ‘The King pursude me fast from Grange coppice flying ; the King did hunt me living ; the Queen’s Park had me dying.’

Henry’s face was bronzed and covered with freckles, his hair yellow and curly, and his neck powerful as the neck of a bull. ‘He useth boots without folding caps and homely and short clothes weareth he.’ He never put on gloves, and his hands at the end of his ‘long champion arms’ were rude and large and it was his custom to carry a weapon—a hand-sword, or long bow, or other hunting gear. And there

in the dim-lit gusty hall this girl of tender age would stand before the King and with his grey 'pykeled' eyes he would gaze upon her, feasting upon her loveliness, upon the loveliness of this secret choice of his youth, upon the loveliness of his 'minion wyfe' with her maidenly ringlets falling about her shoulders. He would observe the tight sleeves of her kirtel or close gown, and her flowing outer robe, her pelisson that was trimmed with swan's down, white as milk in a pail, but not so white as the soft flesh hidden beneath her sumptuous garments, the warm soft flesh of her body smelling of lilac after rain and her face bright as the face of an angel.

*'But thus moche of her beauté telle I may,
That sche was lyk the brighte morn of May
Fulfilde of alle beauté and plesaunce.'*

Many are the versions given as to the manner of the discovery of these lovers by the much-wronged Queen. It was said that her restless suspicions were aroused by a tassel of silk upon one of Henry's spurs as she came upon him by chance in an unfrequented section of the park; and the next day, making a diligent search in the same overgrown vicinity, she found the bower. A second version tells that she used 'a clue of silke, fallen from Rosamund's lap' to find her way to the heart of the labyrinth where her ingenuous rival was sitting 'to take ayre' and too late, too late sprang to her feet 'fleeing from the sight of the searcher.'

*'And Rosamund for very grieve
Not one plaine word could speake.'*

What actually occurred at this dramatic meeting is not known. 'The Queen,' one writer reported, 'so vented her spleene, as the lady lived not long after'; another asserts that it was commonly said 'the Queene came to her by a clue of thridde, or silke, and so dealt with her in such sharpe

and cruell wise that she lived not long after.' We are justified in dismissing the later legends which charge Eleanora with giving Rosamund a cup of poison to drink. It is more probable that the sophisticated middle-aged woman worked upon the feelings of the gentle girl until she consented to retire to Godstow nunnery. For it was here that Rosamund spent the last years of her life, and there is ample evidence to show that the Godstow foundation was much advantaged by her presence, receiving as it did rich endowments not only from Henry but also from the Clifford family: 'the mill of Franton in Gloucestershire and a little meade laying neare it, called Lechton and a salt pit at Wyche' being bequeathed to Godstow by Rosamund's father 'for the health of his soule and for the soules of Margaret his sometimes wife, and Rosamund his daughter.'

'When once the King loveth,' writes the chronicler, 'scarcely will he ever hate, when once he hateth, scarcely ever receiveth he into grace.' Queen Eleanora had had no less than eight children by Henry, but had they been a score the bitterness that was now roused between the royal pair could not have been mended. Henry never rid his mind of the mischief she had worked upon him, and Eleanora never forgave him his royal treachery. She stirred up her sons to rebel against their father and was herself eventually caught escaping to Paris disguised as a common soldier. 'His sons may very well be a trouble to him,' exclaimed Patriarch Heraclius at Dover, repeating the old hearsay as he was returning to the continent after his unsuccessful mission to England, 'as they come from the Devil and will go to the Devil.'

For the next sixteen years Henry kept his ageing wife in confinement as a state prisoner under the care of his great Justiciary Ranulph de Glanville. And yet it was the destiny

of the old Queen long to outlive her husband, and to be solaced and honoured by her son Richard 'governing England with great wisdom and popularity'; thereby fulfilling, according to Matthew Paris, the prophecy of Merlin, 'The Destructive eagle shall rejoice in the third nestling.' At the age of eighty years she was still successfully directing state matters, and it was by his coming vigorously to her rescue when she was being besieged in her summer castle of Mirabel that King John managed to get Prince Arthur of Bretagne into his hands. The old grandmother understood at once the danger in which the rebellious heir of her second son stood and, unmindful of the indignities he had put upon herself, charged the victorious uncle on her malediction to do no harm 'to the noble boy.' Towards the close of her life, with Henry her eldest son dead of a fever, and Geoffrey trodden to death by the coursers at a tournament in Paris, she was in constant correspondence with the Pope. Many of these letters have been preserved. Their style is remarkable. 'The younger King,' she writes, 'and the Count Bretagne both sleep in dust, while their most wretched mother is compelled to live on though tortured by the irremediable recollections of the dead.' When the news of Richard's captivity came to her she signed herself with ironic hauteur 'Eleanora by the wrath of God Queen of England.' At four score she did not hesitate to travel to Spain so that she might escort her granddaughter, Blanche of Castille, to Normandy for the marriage she had arranged for her with the French prince. She died on April 1, 1204, at the age of eighty-two, and until the French Revolution her bones lay undisturbed by the bones of Henry at Fontevrand.

We learn that when the news of Fair Rosamund's death by slow decay and pining' reached Henry, he hurried with

characteristic impetuosity to Godstow, where, distracted, he demanded to have the girl's tomb opened. She had been the King's love, his very marrow, and there was none who might venture to resist his will. Anthony à Wood gives us an odd quotation relating to the macabre and tragic scene. 'We rede that in Englonde was a king that had a concubine whose name was Rose, and for her great bewtey he cleped her Rose a monde, Rosa Mundi, that is to saye, Rose of the world. For him thought that she passed al wyemen in bewtye. It befel that she died and was buried while the King was absent. And whaune he cam agen, for grete love that he had to yr, he wolde se the bodye in the grave and when the grave was opened, there sate an orible tode upon here breste bytwene hir tettys, and a foule adder bigirt hir body about in the midle. And she stank so that the Kyng, ne non other might stond to see that oryble sight.'

It is not clear how long a time Rosamund spent at the Nunnery before she died, but it was long enough to win the love of the sisters. She always obstinately maintained that 'though she had been a concubine, yet she would be saved'; and when the anxious nuns who so dearly cherished her enquired how they could be made sure of this, she pointed to a tree that grew in their garth, saying, 'If that tree be turned into stone after my death, then shall I have life among the saints in heaven.' Within a very few years of her death the tree was observed to be ossifying. 'And the stone was commonlie shewed to passengers at Godstow even till the house was dissolved.'

After the exhumation, performed at the bidding of Henry II, the nuns proved the love they had felt for their sweet friend by having her body once more coffined 'on whose soul God for pity have grace'—and placing it before the altar in their chapel, 'with tapers burning about it,' where

it remained with 'great veneration' until it was removed by the order of Saint Hugh of Lincoln.

This aristocratic prelate from the Grand Chartreuse who had been summoned by Henry to be the first Prior of Witham in Somerset was a priest of wide sympathies, and it seems strange that so liberal and honest a man should have treated the sely bones of a poor maid with such scant respect. The countryside about Woodstock had doubtless rung with the wild romance, and the Bishop may have been made particularly aware of the scandal on the occasion when, as they sat side by side under a Woodstock oak, he gave the King his celebrated quip connected with his poor relations of Falaise. In any case, on seeing the coffin in the middle of the choir 'covered with a pall of silke and set about with lights of waxe,' Saint Hugh demanded 'who it was who lay there.' The nuns thereupon answered: 'It is the tomb of Rosamund that was sometime lemman to the King.' The Bishop then using his pontifical authority declared that 'the hearse of a harlot was not a fit spectacle for a quire of virgins to contemplate, nor was the front of God's altar a proper station for it,' and raising his voice the orgulous Savoyard, son of the Lord of Avalon, cried havoc in the following harsh words: 'Take out of the place the harlot and bury her without the church, lest Christian religion should grow in contempt, and to the end that, through example of her, other women being made afraid may beware, and keepe themselves from unlawful and advouterous company with men.' The nuns could do nothing but obey the commands of the Bishop, but Anthony à Wood was of opinion that instead of again burying her stone coffin in the churchyard they merely conveyed it into the Chapter House because, when the flesh had 'quite perished,' it is rumoured that they put the remains of Rosamund in a perfumed leather bag,

which bag these 'chaste sisters' enclosed in lead and brought back into the chapel, burying it in a most delicate and stately coffin of stone. 'This wench had a little coffer scarcely of two foot long made by a wondercraft that is yet seen there. Therein it seemeth that giants fight, beasts startle, foule flee, and fysh leap, without any man's moving.' So was Saint Hugh's animosity against the lady who had been so 'infamous for her lewdness' happily defeated!

The antiquary Stow tells us that in his time a cross stood in the vicinity of Godstow with these lines carved upon it :

*' Qui meat hac oret ; signum salutis adoret,
Utque sibi datur veniam Rosamundae precetur.'*

The somewhat unexpected words of the final line may be thus translated : 'Let his prayer be that the favour of Rosamund be granted to himself.'

King John, Henry's youngest and darling son, seems to have felt tenderly towards her. When he came to the throne he most generously endowed the Nunnery that 'these holy virgins might releeve with their prayers the souls of his father King Hanrie and of the Lady Rosamund there interred.' It had been the sight of John's name amongst the list of conspirators that had hastened the death of Henry, and these endowments of Godstow may well have been bestowed as a penitential act of filial piety. The Plantagenets were as quick to repent as they were to betray. When Cœur de Lion knelt by the side of his father's corpse he was prostrated with remorse, and yet only a few days had passed since he had laughed to feel his ears tingle with the old man's whispered execrations as Henry signed the humiliating treaty that he and King Philip had forced upon him. 'Now let things go as they will. I care no more for myself or the world.' It was in the same black mood that

Henry had uttered his notorious blasphemy upon seeing Le Mans, the city of his birth, go up in flames : ‘ Since Thou hast taken from me the town I loved best, where I was born and bred, and where my father lies buried, I will have my revenge on Thee too.’ It was not without reason that Henry on hearing of the news of this last rebellion ordered his Windsor artist to paint a picture of an old king-eagle having its eyes pecked out by its young.

Henry was buried at Fontevrand and Richard noticed that death itself had not been able to smooth from his countenance the signs of the ungovernable rage that had troubled his last hours. Richard himself was to live but ten years longer and was then to be buried in the same Abbey. It was his particular wish, however, that his lion’s heart enclosed in a silver casket should be taken to the Cathedral of Rouen. In the year 1842 this precious relic was dug up in Rouen Cathedral, and on the case being opened the heart of the greatest hero of medieval chivalry was found to be, though withered to the thinness of a faded sycamore leaf, in a state of marvellous preservation.

In the days of her childhood in Somerset, Rosamund Clifford must have known well the rich scent of the meadow-sweet that grows by the Sedgemoor rhines and also the fairer fainter fragrance of the wild roses festooning the high honeysuckle hedges of Cannington’s sloping park. At the time of the Reformation the creature scraps of this, the most romantic of all the girls that figure in our island history, were disturbed once again. The sacrilegious act is thus described by Leland : ‘ Rosamund’s tumbe at Godstowe Nunnery was taken up of late ; it is a stone with this inscription Tumba Rosamunda. Her bones were closed in lede, and withyn that, bones were closyd yn lether. When it was opened a very swete smell came owt of it.’

MOTHER.

BY CEDRIC WALLIS.

DAVID had never seen his mother with conscious eyes. He was barely nine months old when she died leaving, it seemed to David, curiously few tangible traces behind to show what she had been like. There were one or two photographs, it is true. They showed a tall woman with a pale, oval face, wearing her hair piled on her head in an outmoded fashion and clothes as strange as her coiffure. It was difficult for a small boy to sentimentalise over likenesses so far removed from life as he knew it. David found them rather disappointing. Conversation about his mother on the part of various relatives gave him what he was sure was an equally distorted picture. His aunts, carrying out with enthusiasm the English middle-class ritual of speaking nothing but extravagant praise of the dead, made of their departed sister-in-law a cross between an angel and a genius. If they spoke truth, she must have been a very uncomfortable person to live with, decided David, but he was secretly sure they exaggerated. He had heard them exaggerate about other things. It was a family failing for which he had learned early in life to make liberal allowance.

When David was a little over two years of age, his father married Miss Brown. She was dignified but friendly and David liked her. She liked him too, finding him less terrifying than her two elder stepchildren, with their disconcerting unwillingness to accept her as anything but Miss Brown. When David called her Miss Brown it was to tease, because he had noticed that it made her blush. It

usually earned him a friendly spank and created an atmosphere of the greatest goodwill. When the others forgot to say 'Mother,' as they too often did, the result was a strained silence that was felt by everyone present to be rather painful.

As time went on, the two elder children grew into verbal acceptance of their stepmother, though she never felt that she had become more than a habit with them, try as she might to win their confidence and affection. With David it was exactly otherwise. Their relation was natural and affectionate and infinitely companionable, but it had in it a strange obstacle of formal reserve that worried them both, though it was never mentioned between them. Almost its only direct manifestation was an unaccountable reluctance on the child's part to give her the title of mother. The joke about Miss Brown wore itself out in time, but it left behind it a disturbing hiatus. Her youngest stepchild had no name for her. Occasionally she would insist, as a question of manners, on the respectful form of address. When this happened David would comply without any fuss, repeating 'Yes, Mother,' after her like a docile little parrot, but with a minimum of meaning in his voice. A few minutes later he would give her another unadorned 'Yes,' and if questioned further would say with obvious sincerity that he didn't know why it was. It was against her idea of personal integrity to force the issue and she determined to win him gradually by subtler means.

In a few years' time a small brother and sister joined the family. The gap in age between David and his elder brother was larger than that between him and his small stepbrother, so that in most ways he seemed to belong to the younger brood of which he was not really a member. Actually he stood alone between the two groups, partaking wholly of the mentality of neither. His elder brother and sister talked

at times of 'our own mother.' David listened with intense curiosity, but disdained questions on the subject as vaguely disloyal to the other beloved person who was still without name or title to him. The younger children, who knew nothing of the division in the family, prattled artlessly of the only mother they knew. David longed to join them, but somehow couldn't. The figure of that strange woman—his own mother—stood firmly between, vague, shadowy and only half-realised, but most indisputably there. If only he could see her for just a moment of time—know what she was really like—the mystery might be solved and the obstacle removed. What was unthinkable was the setting up of one person in another's place, without opportunity being given for argument or evidence or understanding—without even reliable knowledge. David sighed to himself, as he obligingly lowered his head so that his baby sister could possess herself of the tufts of yellow hair that were her favourite plaything of the moment. How easily diverted *she* was, he thought. Life at one and a half years of age seems simple enough to a puzzled philosopher of seven.

The stepmother's policy was simple enough too. Its aim was to identify David in every possible way with her own children. Their respective ages made her object easy of achievement in many ways. The three younger children spent most of their time together, while the two elder ones used the greater degree of freedom allowed them to ramble off on their own. In some ways perhaps David was kept back slightly, to companion the development of his younger brother, but the mother held this a justifiable temporary check to which she and David must both submit in their struggle to find one another. To this general principle were added from time to time more positive occasions for affirming the unity of her trio—opportunities which she never failed to

seize with both hands. One day, for example, an elderly and very short-sighted cousin of her husband's called and found the two small boys playing together in the garden. Failing to observe their obvious difference in size, she asked rather foolishly :

‘ Let me see, my dear, which of them is yours ? ’

‘ Both ! ’ came the answer, as rapidly as the crack of a whip but as softly as a caress.

Even the slight impoliteness of making an elderly relative look rather silly could not be allowed to mar such an opportunity. The glow of pleasure that flooded David's cheeks told her that he was pleased, though he said nothing, nor did his subsequent conduct suggest that any deep impression had been made. The stepmother would have glowed in her turn, had she known with what high exultation these evidences of belonging were inwardly treasured. At present she was building better than she knew.

Soon after this David caught a bad chill, which developed into a high and wasting fever. Constant nursing and attention were essential. The stepmother turned over the household and the other children to the care of a willing and capable sister and herself shouldered the main burden of nursing the delirious boy. She would not for anything have forgone so great a chance of serving the child, and also she believed in her own capacity to stimulate him back to health.

David's experiences during his delirium were crude with the over-emphasis of fever, but to his childish imagination they had a certain quality of magnificence. He had in recent (uncensored) browsings in his father's bookshelf been much occupied by a dramatically illustrated translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, and it was as the Poet making his tour of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise that he now imagined himself.

In place of the austere figure of Virgil, he seemed to have for guide old Cobb, a local taxi-proprietor who had always been something of a hero in David's eyes. The object of their search was David's mother, but it was a rule of the game that she must not be mentioned by name.

'What will she be like, Cobb? Shall I know her? Will she know me? Is she looking for me too? What if she's a disappointment, Cobb? Shall I be able to talk to her? Will she answer questions?'—so he babbled on, minute after minute and hour after hour—sometimes more and sometimes less coherently.

The woman sitting at the bedside caught little of it, except occasionally the name of Cobb. She smiled wanly to herself at the incongruity of such a companion for a child's wandering in the valley of the shadow. What were her thoughts? Mainly the severely practical ones of a capable woman faced by a problem that she alone can solve. Only at long intervals did the desolating thought sweep over her that she sat only a few yards away from him and he was unaware of her existence. Where was he? Was she losing him before he had ever become wholly hers? Resolutely she turned her mind away from speculation and back to practical needs. The child was thirsty, but he still didn't know who gave him to drink. If only he could sleep, the doctor said the struggle would be as good as won.

It was late afternoon when David came to the end of his search. The sun made a yellow patch on the pale walls of the small bedroom. The blurred shadow of a tree-branch swayed slowly to and fro across this square of light. David was quiet and his eyes were closed. Cobb had told him that he was going to see his mother, but he must wait to open his eyes till he was told. He understood this—it was like the surprise games he had played when he was younger.

His father had taught him that if you looked before the time, there was no surprise.

The stepmother leaned over the bed. The child's breathing was so light that it might almost have stopped. Was he asleep, or was he——? As the darker thought clutched at her, his eyes opened. There was an instant of puzzled recognition and then they closed again.

David waited for Cobb to explain. He'd told him to open his eyes, but then his mother wasn't there. *She* was there. The explanation came, but it wasn't Cobb's wheezy voice that gave it. He wasn't sure that it was a voice at all. It was as though something light and warm and soft and sweet-smelling just happened to him. He knew with delicious suddenness that because *she* was there, *she* was the mother he had been seeking. *She* was the other woman as well as her dear familiar self. Your mother didn't make you, after all—you made your mother, and *she* was the mother he had made for himself with his own mind. He luxuriated for a moment in the tremendous simplicity of the truth he had just discovered. When he opened his eyes again she was still there. He knew she would always be there now.

'Hello—Mother,' he said—smiled at her and turned gently over into a peaceful, healing sleep.

THE RECTOR (circ. 1860).

*Oh ! Those were the times, when as lions or bears
We chased through the Rectory's pantries and stairs.
There are few who remember the shouts and the laughter,
So this shall be written for those that come after.*

*The Rector, I mind him—his long rusty coat,
As he sat in his study and argued or wrote,
Or fastened the roses or chopped at the trees
With his long beard a-waggin' when caught by the breeze.*

*In the summer (I think 'twas the best of his jobs)
He'd stand by the wicket and bowl us with lobs,
Or like an old turkey in front of the creese
Would sky the red ball o'er the Rectory trees.*

*Then parsons was parsons ! He'd a couple of cows,
A dairy and laundry attached to the house,
Two horses for ridin', a garden bewitchin',
And I've seen forty people sit down in his kitchen.*

*In the old-fashioned coach-house a carriage or two,
Such as you might be proud of, stood painted in blue ;
Oh ! Those were the times in the warm harness-room,
When we boys played Hazard with Simmons the groom.*

*He'd joke with us boys, for he'd nothing of pride :
' Come to Church ! Be a pillar, and don't stand outside !'
And set up aloft like a pious old bird
From his pulpit he gave us the milk of the Word.*

*And what of his Lady? Oh, she was a treasure!
A beautiful creature just cut to his measure!
She taught Sunday School, and she polished the sconces,
'Twas a pleasure to hear her repeat the Responses.*

*She'd bring you the port from the Rector's own bin,
Or a bunch of his grapes, or some soup in a tin,
She'd coax you to health with the puddin's she made,
But better than all were the prayers that she prayed.*

*The family prospered; though twelve was the peak,
It always seemed movin' ahead, so to speak,
And when it o'erflowed, with a message emphatic
He called for the builder to add on an attic.*

*Then the Concerts! John Peel to the rafters went flyin'
And Barbara Allan would set the maids cryin',
And Bill and Miss Biddy, as if they were prayin',
Kept asking us all what the wild waves were sayin'!*

*Or the fiddles were twanged by Miss Rose and Miss Anna
(Miss Ethel accompanied on the piano)
And the Rector he played on a fiddle as big
As Mr. Adolphus's old market gig.*

*Where the wall of the Chancel stands facin' the east,
They lie side by side, 'John Anthony, Priest
And Belinda his wife,' Oh, sweet be their rest!
Then parsons was parsons—and he was the best.*

W. J. FERRAR.

'NO BUSINESS OF MINE.'

BY ROBERT VERRIER.

I MET young Brock for the first time when I was riding home from the village. I was a new neighbour, though a very inconsiderable one when matched with him acre for acre, my newly purchased ten-acre paddock against the ten-thousand-acre station which his grandfather, so I understood, had purchased from a Maori chieftain, this ranking in New Zealand the equal of Norman descent in England. He was amiable in a sheepish way and I could not quite gauge why he should look so ill at ease, whether he was afraid of me or whether he feared that I was afraid of him. There was reason in neither attitude. He could have seen nothing in me but an uncritical neighbour pleased to make his acquaintance, whereas I could see plainly in him that he was in some way on the defensive.

His home lay in the same direction as mine, and we rode together asking and answering conventional questions until we came to a lane that was a short cut to both our places, although I had never used it.

'Shall we try this short cut?' I asked, reining in my horse.

He made no reply, and I turned in my saddle thinking he had not heard me. I knew he had halted when I had halted and, as soon as I saw his face, I knew that he had heard my question. He was staring up the lane with a look on his face that seemed to me both sullen and defiant.

'What an unhappy fool,' I thought, for I was rapidly losing all goodwill towards him. 'He is afraid of strangers,

and he seems to hate this pretty lane. If I owned that chestnut mare he is riding and his ten thousand acres and his youth, I should be afraid of nobody and pleased with everything.'

He was so occupied with his contemplation of the lane that I became restive. 'Shall we try this short cut?' I asked again, somewhat impatiently this time.

He started. 'I never use that road,' he said abruptly, in an unnecessarily loud tone. 'I should advise you not to use it, either.'

'Why not?'

But he did not answer. He began to walk his horse away from the lane along the road.

I looked after him in indignant astonishment. The insolence of the man! Did he expect me to follow him meekly without an explanation? I was not to use the lane. Of course I would use it and immediately, and I felt a childish desire to put my tongue out at his broad back. I think it was only the distraction of the beauty of his mount's hind-quarters that arrested me, the fascinating action of the muscles under the sleek brown hide, warm and glistening in the strong sunlight. I was still looking after him when it evidently occurred to him that he must owe me an apology.

'I beg your pardon,' he said when he had brought his horse alongside mine once more. 'I'm afraid I was a bit abrupt.'

I wanted more than an apology. I wanted an explanation of his virtual command not to use the lane. 'Why should I not use the lane?' I asked, making it as clear as possible by my manner that I made acceptance of his apology conditional on his reply.

'Do you know Jack Henniker?'

'No.'

'Ah! Well, he lives on that lane.'

'Still, I do not see . . .'

'He is a liar and a cheat.' He spoke the words with the force of hatred behind them. 'He is a man you'd willingly ride twenty miles out of your way to avoid.'

As he became heated I, being an Englishman, chilled. 'Of course,' I said, 'I like to form my own opinion of my neighbours.'

I hoped that he would ride away and leave me to ride up the lane to take my chance with Henniker, the liar and cheat. After all, what did it matter to me whether the man was indeed a liar and a cheat until he had lied to me and cheated me? I might call him a liar and a cheat then with a fervour the equal of Brock's, but, in justice, I must consider him an honest man until I had experienced his knavery in my own person. There might be two sides to the matter and it was quite possible that Henniker's first words to me would be, 'Brock is a liar and a cheat.'

But my new acquaintance was clearly unwilling that I should ride up the lane, at any rate while he was by. 'Naturally,' he admitted, 'you must form your own opinion of your neighbours, but I can put you on your guard. If you will ride with me by the road, perhaps I can convince you that Henniker is a man to avoid.'

He did his utmost. Henniker was not only a liar and a cheat, he was also a blackmailer, it seemed. He was a relater of scandals, an ancient mariner who held you fascinated while he poured into your unwilling ear disgraceful stories of a youth spent in dishonour and treachery. He babbled. He was senile with all the lewdness of unhallowed senility. Never had I heard such sustained condemnation of one man by another, and I wondered. If Henniker was a blackmailer, it was my companion he was blackmailing.

It was as clear as a confession. The stories Henniker told concerned him, and his manner on meeting me was due to his fear that I had already met this scandalous old man. Yet, the stories could not relate to him personally. He was too young. Well, it was no business of mine.

For the last mile of our ride together I shut my ears to my companion's denunciations and looked about me. His land lay on both sides of the road we were travelling. It was fat land. To the left were bays of close green meadow, smooth as lawn, bounded by a winding river ; to the right rolling parkland rising gradually to heights clothed with dark evergreen forest from which, here and there, naked red sandstone crags jutted. I could feel reflected in myself its smiling content. The grass had the same sleek shine as his horse's coat. I looked sideways at my companion. He should be as fat and shining and content as his own fields, and here he was haggard and sallow and miserable, poisoning his own mind in his efforts to poison mine against a man I had never seen, and he was taking too great pains in doing it for my liking.

I heard a word or two shouted across at me. ‘Once he gets you into his clutches he will never let you go.’ What nonsense ! I would be as safe as a rolled-up hedgehog from a pup. Why was he so concerned to frighten me away from Henniker ? It could not be because he so valued my good opinion which a word from Henniker might destroy. His hatred must be a fixed idea, swallowing up all pleasure in his golden inheritance and, yes, all the dignity that should go with it.

Well, it was a lonely countryside—there were not a dozen souls on the whole of his ten thousand acres—and in loneliness strange obsessions were born in unwatchful minds. Loneliness ! It was that word that ran in my mind as I

rode away from him. I had known its horror, but now I had sought it out as a thing desired, much in the mood in which an old warrior in the days of the Crusades might have retired into a hermitage, his mind well stocked with memories and a philosophy to serve him till death. Brock, Henniker—they and their quarrels were nothing to me. I would in future listen to neither. I certainly would use the lane, but I would not seek out Henniker.

But Henniker sought out me. Tom Hulbert, my man-of-all-work, was waiting for me at the gate. 'There's a queer bird in the parlour,' he said as I passed the reins to him.

'Henniker,' I guessed with certainty. 'What kind of a queer bird?' I asked aloud.

'Queer.'

'Yes, but how?' I insisted.

'I don't know. I just felt it.'

'Well, I suppose I must find out for myself,' I grumbled. 'I wish you had got rid of him, though. What is his name?'

'Henniker.'—My acumen delighted me.—'I did try to get rid of him, but I couldn't shift him and he's too old to chuck out. You'll see what I mean by "queer."'

'Queer' was the right word I found, and I could understand Hulbert's inability to qualify it. It was a generalisation that covered not the outward appearance of the man, but the life force within him. Outwardly he was a pathetic but not uncommon figure, a tremulous old man with his back to his grave, but he was more than that too. There was neither resignation nor resentment in his eyes. His eyes were smiling—no, not smiling, either—grinning, and that grin told me that all his life he had laughed when others would have wept, and grinned when others would have been

filled with awe. That was the 'queerness' that set him apart and that Hulbert could not fathom.

'So Brock wouldn't let you ride up the lane,' were his first words; and then he shuffled close to me and continued: 'I was in my lookout and I saw him stop you. I know what he said to you. "Henniker is a liar and a blackmailer." Something like that, wasn't it?'

His eyes were fixed on mine and I felt that I was losing all awareness of my surroundings. The solid things around me were dissolving into a fantastic mist of unreality. His mocking eyes that were fixed on mine and his thin trickling voice were becoming the only realities.

I stepped back desperately in order to break the spell, but, in stepping back, I delivered myself into his power. My knees met the edge of a chair and I sat down suddenly. He drew up a chair and sat down, encroaching on my inmost privacy with the deliberateness of a spider.

His hand was on my knee and his eyes were on mine. I heard his voice, 'I'll tell you why I hate him. I hate him because he's not the man his grandfather was. I served under old Brock at sea and I came ashore with him. He was a man who took what he wanted and excused himself to nobody. Why should he? It's the way of the world. This damned sissy-boy calls his grandfather an old thief and says he doubts whether he has any right to the land. A rotten socialist! You should have seen the place when we got here—nothing but bush and scrub—and look at it now. Who has a better right to the land than those that make it grow good meat and wool? There's a fair question for you.'

The answer was in my mind. 'Those that make good use of it,' and I knew that if I could put it into words the spell would be broken.

But he gave me no chance. His hand gripped my knee and he hurried on. 'No. Wait. I'll tell you how he got the land. It was as much mine as his. He promised me half, if I'd back him up. He cheated me, but I didn't mind. It was old Brock's way, and he promised to see me right in the end. And so he did—about the only promise he ever kept. He left me a pension on the estate, little enough, but enough to live on, though this man begrudges me every penny of it. He hates me because I tell the true story of Old Brock and how he got this land, and back him up and say he was a great man. Because, what is a great man? There's another fair question for you and I'll give you the answer so as to save you a headache. A great man's a man who sticks at nothing to get what he wants. You can't deny that. A man pops up out of the ruck and everybody says, "That's a great man," but they don't think how he got there—at least, they didn't when I was a youngster. Nowadays there's too much sniffing at great men. How'd he get there? Where'd his millions come from? I wasn't cut out to be a great man, but I helped one to his pickings and I'm proud of it. They ought to speak out and tell people straight. "Yes, I downed him and him and him. What's to be ashamed of in that? It was him or me. It's fair fighting." And I'll speak up for him as long as I've breath in my body.

'I'll tell you. We came ashore at the mouth of the river where Anson stands now, just him and me. "Jack," he says to me one day when we were off Samoa, "I'm getting fat. I'm going ashore trading and you're coming with me." "Right, Captain," I says. "I'm your man." "I fixed on the place years ago," he says. "New Zealand. Good anchorage, a nice river, plenty of flax and plenty of dried heads, and we both speak the lingo."

'It was here he meant. "What do you think of it, Jack?" he says as the brig we'd taken passage in dropped anchor under the headland one evening. "It isn't only trade I'm after, it's land. There's plenty of good fat land under all that bush. I've always wanted to end up on a farm, but what'd I get in England?—ten acres and hat in hand to the squire. Not me. Here's thousands of acres, lad, half for me and half for you, an estate fit for a duke, if you back me up."

'We landed our stores in the morning. Old Rimataku, the chief, was glad to see us, gave us a hut and gave orders for a feast. He was worried because a tribe up the coast had got guns and were wiping out their neighbours. He wanted guns, quick, and of course we'd got them. We'd got gin, too. "One tot's worth a dozen guns," Flood used to say. He had a lot of good proverbs like that. He gave Rimataku a tot as soon as all our goods were in the hut, neat. He'd never tasted water like that before. He was all over us for more, but Brock said no. "One tot at a time," he used to say to me, "and they'll eat out of your hand." He was right too, as he always was. Rima would have done anything for us, with one eye on the bottle.

'When we got him outside, he made a long speech adopting us both into the tribe, but I wasn't listening to him. I was watching a girl who was helping get the feast ready. By corry, she was a beauty and no mistake, a real beauty, not just a pretty face and the rest a sack of clothes. Because she'd got nothing on to speak of, and when she turned her back to us her buttocks were bare, which was queer, I thought, as she didn't look like a slave.

'She was washing sweet potatoes in the stream. I couldn't take my eyes off her till I got a dig in the ribs and Brock said, "That's my girl. Don't you get sweet on her, Jack."

" "She's no good for you," I says. "She's a slave. The chief's got a daughter."

" "Slave or no slave, she's mine," he says. "So you keep your eyes off her. What's more, I'm going to marry her, all regular aboard ship or before a missionary, if I can find one." He was a quick one to make up his mind. "What's the good of an estate without an heir, a proper, legal heir?" he said to me.

" "That's so," I said, but I couldn't keep my eyes off the girl.

'She was picking leaves off a broad-leaved tree that hung over the stream, and when she had got a pile of them she carried them over to a piping-hot cooking-pit. You should have seen her walk. Young Brock's mare was nothing to her.

'She spread the leaves over the stones of the cooking-pit and they hissed and little jets of steam shot up from the blisters raised by the heat. Then she heaped the potatoes in, and on top of them she laid out pigeons like a catch of trout.

'There were other slaves, men and women, bringing fish and water to pour over the stones to make steam, but the girl took no notice of them. When she had finished her job, she came towards us. Old Rimataku was still talking. He was explaining to everybody how he was going to use the guns to wipe off old scores.

'The girl stood in front of him patiently till he stopped for breath and then she touched his staff and said, "You will kill me with your mere."

'A slave came up and turned her round. The chief touched her left buttock with his staff. "That is mine," he said. Then he touched her right arm. "That must go to Rewi Wairao. Tell him and his people I shall have need of them."

'The girl said to him again, "You will kill me with your mere," but he turned his back on her.

'She walked back to the pit and sat down on the edge, drawing up her knees. Then she took a flax rope held out to her by a slave, and tied her ankles together.

"By Christ!" I heard Brock shout. "They're going to cook her."

'And I saw that he was right as he always was. I couldn't do anything, I was too scared, but Brock kept his wits. He threw back his head and made a motion of drinking.

"Two tots for that girl," he roared at old Rimataku, and repeated the offer in Maori.

'Rima grinned and made for our hut.

"Hey! The girl!" the Captain shouted.

'He wouldn't move until the girl was loosed and one of the men slaves put in her place.

'When we had got rid of Rimataku, we got the girl into the hut for a talk. She told us she was the daughter of Rua Kapunga, chief of the Waitere. She had been captured through her own fault, going too far into the bush alone. Her people held the land at the back of the hills. They were strong and they were only biding their time to wipe out this scum from the face of the earth.

"Jack," Brock said to me when she'd finished, "here's our land, boy, and all the trade we want."

"How?" I asked.

"Why!" he said, "my girl here's a chief's daughter after all. She's not much worth to me here as a slave, but as the daughter of Rua Kapunga she's worth her weight in gold. What's to prevent us from backing Rua with our guns against this lot?"

'Brains! Brock wasn't a great man, eh? There's many ruling countries without half his brains. Didn't he

size up the situation and see the best way out all in a moment of time : And action : We did it all that same night. I was so excited and proud of old Brock that I'd the strength of ten.

'The girl was a clever one. Brock explained the scheme to her and she saw what he was after straight away. She'd hardly wait till dark to be off to bring up her tribe. That was her part in the job. She swore she'd have old Rimataku's buttock.

'It was easy. Our hut backed on to the bush and we knocked a big hole in the wall on that side. Then Brock and I took an armful of guns and went with the girl to fix on a meeting-place in the bush—not too far away.

'Oh, it was easy. Everything went right. We got all the guns out and the gin, and Rua Kapunga and his men came up about two hours before dawn, with the girl, Hinerata, leading the way like Boadicea. We had time to teach them how to use the guns, unloaded of course.

'You'd have laughed to see their antics when they went off at the attack. We loaded them at the last minute and it was lucky for us that Rua's men were just a bit less scared than Rima's. The only guns that did any damage were Brock's and mine. Brock got Rima right through the head and I got one of the priests, a big hulking fellow that looked like mischief. The rest were so scared it was like killing seals.

'That's how Brock got the land. He married the girl. I didn't get anything, but I didn't mind. He saw me right in the end as he always said he would.

'You never saw Hinerata, did you ? She died last year—a hundred and four. She was this Brock's granny, and you wouldn't have thought it to look at her that she'd once eaten old Rimataku's left buttock, though she was

never ashamed of it nor of the Captain. Good luck to her !

'Well, they're both dead now and, whatever this fellow says, Brock was a great man. He took what he wanted . . .'

I fell asleep, and when Hulbert waked me I felt chilled and exhausted as though I had slept for hours in a clammy, stinking dugout.

'A queer bird, that,' Hulbert said. 'Did he tell you how old Captain Brock got this land ?'

I looked round in surprise. 'Yes. Has he told you ?'

'He tells everybody and, if they won't listen, he makes them listen. I expect he made you, didn't he ?'

'He did. Get out the whiskey, Hulbert. I've a bad taste in my mouth.'

'I don't wonder. They must have been as dirty a couple of crooks as ever stepped. I'd wring his scraggy neck if I was young Brock.'

I met young Brock the second time as I was riding home from the village two days after Henniker's visit to me. I had turned up the lane off the main road and, passing the high hedges that mask the first bend, I came upon him suddenly. We both reined in our horses.

I was surprised, of course, to see him riding down a lane he never used, though I am sure my surprise did not show in my face.

'Good evening, Mr. Brock,' I said. 'Glorious weather.'

'I have been paying Henniker his pension,' he remarked. The weather might have been a freezing Scotch mist from the gloom on his face. 'He's seen you, he says. I suppose he told you the story of how my grandfather came by his land, now mine, and what a "great man" he was.'

'He did, but I don't see that it's any business of mine.'

'It is. It's everybody's business now. He'll never tell it again. Call in as you go by. I'm going home and they'll find me there when they want me.'

He rode away quickly and I set my horse up the slope in an easy walk. I was in no hurry. I knew what I should find. The implication of his words was clear. He had killed Henniker.

The young fool ! Another year, two years—what did it matter ?—and Nature would have snuffed him out.

I dismounted at a flimsy wicket in the hedge. I looked round the garden. Green shoots of coarse grass were struggling up through yellow tussocks. Grass grew tall through the cankered branches of an apple tree. The path was trodden drunkenly through the tangle.

I looked up at the house, a board shack, weathered, paintless, with a rickety balcony projecting from the roof level in front—Henniker's lookout.

The young fool ! Why could he not have read the story this hovel told ? Nature had numbered its days even as she had numbered those of Henniker. I could see its future. I could see it in a year's time, two years' time—what did it matter ?—overwhelmed in corruption.

Henniker was lying sprawled on a bare, worm-eaten floor. His neck was broken and it was clear from the way he lay that it was through no accident. I felt only indignation. The young fool ! Risking his neck and perhaps fifty years of good life to push this carrion over the threshold. And to take it lying down ! He was skulking out of the sunshine waiting for them to come for him.

For sheer stupidity it was more than I could tolerate. I carried Henniker outside and threw him with all my strength on the ground below his lookout. He might have been a bundle of straw for weight, but he spreadeagled

convincingly, his head bent under him like a chicken's under its wing. Then I climbed up a rickety ladder to the lookout and examined the rail. It was worm-eaten and when I pressed it with my foot it sagged and gave way, opening an obvious gate to the hereafter for old Henniker. There is no Sherlock Holmes in our district.

As I climbed down the ladder, I thought, 'This should have been Brock's dirty work.'

The jury brought in a verdict of accidental death and young Brock came out again into the sunshine. We are good friends, and he never meets me but he thanks me, particularly on days when it feels good to be alive.

New Zealand.

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA AT SUNSET.

*We pass through Oodnadatta
(To south lies lone Maree,)
Through gibber stones and salibush
To the land of mulga tree.*

*The sun goes down in glory
White gum trunks shade to green
And jagged rocks and sandhills
Take on a gold-red sheen.*

*This cruel hungry wasteland
That turns man's heart to stone
Becomes transformed, transcended,
To a splendour all its own.*

THEODORA ROSCOE.

BY THE WAY.

AN American friend of mine who knows London well told me in the course of his latest visit here this summer that the two things which had most impressed him were the continuance of the time-honoured helpfulness to all and sundry on the part of the London police, still maintaining in this era of increased crowds and traffic babel that great reputation they have so long and so deservedly held, and the unfailing civility and good humour of the London bus-conductors : those of us who remember the joviality and witticisms of the horse-omnibus men will be appreciative that a visitor has found, even in these rushy days, the persistence of the type of which we were silently so proud.

★ ★ ★

‘ October brings the cold weather down ’—so we sang at school : at least it brings the mellowness and beauty of the year. And cricket, even that last strange function of the Goose Match at Harrow, is ended : the 150th year of the M.C.C. is closed. Is it advancing age in ourselves or in the game itself that makes it seem less wonderful than of old ? It is not what it was, at least it does not seem to be. Nothing ever is, of course : and yet the thought cannot be dispelled. The two-eyed stance began it, in one cricketer’s view probably the generation that went before him would say, marl. Is it the hurrying modernism of life that makes the ‘ leisurely warfare ’ now so much less attractive ? Must all

things, even cricket, be governed by those most moving of words,

‘ *We must endure
Our going hence even as our coming hither* ’ ?

Poignant as the questions are to any who has so loved the greatest of all human games yet invented, they persist—and, even in a year when there was a real fight for the Championship, receive no answer that can reassure.

★ ★ ★

A subject of much interest to lovers of poetry is raised by one commentator upon my collected edition. Extracting, as is the way of commentators in this age of speed, one sentence out of thirty years’ work, he advances the argument that the best poetry can only be written by those able and willing to devote their lives solely to poetry. It may be so : few poets in any age and none in this have the ability, even if they have the will—economic pressure alone is enough to prevent them—and, as the commentator admits, he has the mighty name of Shakespeare against him, but of Shakespeare he disposes ingeniously by remarking that we really know little of his life. We do, but every scrap of that little is completely opposed to the argument ; and we do know a good deal of the life of Chaucer and Milton, not to mention many another labourer in the world’s vineyards. But in any case, is it arguable that no one can live ‘ in whorls of men ’—the phrase that adversely attracted the commentator’s eye—and write true poetry ? Nature-poetry and poems born entirely of the imagination might gain from the seclusion of their creator, but could poems of experience, of drama, of humanity ? And does any man live by bread alone ? Of course periods of solitude and self-communion are essential to the growth of all poets, and indeed of all human souls,

but surely not to the total exclusion of periods of interchange of thought, of labour, even labour against the will and grain, and of all that makes for manhood in a world that has travail as well as joy : Is there not after all some truth in Pope's line, ' The proper study of mankind is Man ' ?

★ ★ ★

And now Berkeley Square, until so recently one of the grandly historic Squares of the world, has given up the unequal struggle. Only a few years ago it suffered a mortal wound with the transmogrification of Lansdowne House : now its spirit is finally extinguished. We are beyond doubt vandals to a degree that would be incredible but for the evidence of our own eyes. All over London—and alas, in most parts of England also—we are engaged in destroying with zest, or at all events without compunction, what is rare and beautiful in order to erect instead what is commonplace and of no distinction : how our grandchildren will jeer at us, and with far more reason than we jeer at the Victorians ! No wonder poetry fails to flourish in an age that is showing itself impenitently and at every turn so grossly materialistic !

★ ★ ★

An Irishman came hurrying down the street with his arms held wide apart and his fingers pointed forwards. ' Hullo, Pat,' said a wag, grinning ; ' been fishing ? ' ' Don't stop me ! ' replied Pat anxiously : ' I've the size of a door in me hands.'

★ ★ ★

It is to be hoped that not only Ministers but also the members of both Houses of Parliament will have devoted a few hours of the recess to reading about, and a good many days to

reflecting upon, the state of Europe as set forth by Mr. A. L. Kennedy in his *Britain Faces Germany* (Cape, 5s. n.). It is a small book, but a tremendous problem, and though it is handled with the authority and skill that we should expect from one who is so widely travelled and experienced in these foreign fields as the former Assistant Foreign Editor of *The Times*, it would be too much to expect a real solution. Mr. Kennedy's book, only 194 pages in all including its 5 Appendices, divides itself into three parts, first, a trenchant, indeed almost devastating, account of the sins of omission of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Sir John Simon, secondly an illuminating record of the complete divergence between the pronouncements Herr Hitler has made, in accordance with their destiny, Germany or countries foreign to Germany, and, thirdly, a bold attempt at constructive suggestion—which in fact amounts to trusting the good faith of a leader whom he has just been at pains to show it would be foolhardy to trust. But there are many very sound, if very disquieting, passages. Of the foreign policy he criticises, Mr. Kennedy says, 'for a while the organisation of aspirations passed for statesmanship'; of the lost chances of January–April, 1934, 'the failure to force that great opportunity was perhaps the lowest point of depression to which British diplomacy has sunk in recent history'; of the League of Nations, 'its executive body, the Council, is better constituted to perform arbitral than diplomatic functions,' and of our need to make a reasonable offer to Germany in spite of French obduracy, 'we simply cannot afford to become slaves of the habit of waiting upon others before we can act.' A valuable, deeply interesting, and gravely ominous examination of one of the major difficulties of the world of to-day.

* * *

For those readers who like a book that does not fit easily

into any recognised character, let me recommend *Triumphant Pilgrimage* by Owen Rutter (Harrap, 10s. 6d. n.). Mr. Rutter knows Malay which was, if not absolutely essential, at all events a very desirable adjunct to his writing ; but this book is only in slight degree about Malay and not at all about Mr. Rutter. It is the account he was invited to write of the pilgrimage made by an Englishman, who turned Muslim and is called 'David Chele', and the Malay girl Chele married not because he loved her and desired a wife but because he understood—and rightly—that he would find the possession of a Muslim wife a help toward the achievement of his desire to go on the pilgrimage of the Haj to Mecca—of which pilgrimage, the difficulties placed in the way of 'Chele' and of his wife, Munirah, and of their final success and the description of the pilgrimage itself about half the book is made, and very interesting it is. The other half consists of Mr. Rutter's account of 'Chele's' turning the Malay girl into a lovely and accomplished woman, able to hold her own anywhere, and of 'Chele's' intensely emotional and spiritual adventures into Islam for the purpose, so we are told, of enabling Islam to realise itself as a world force for peace. The two halves do not seem entirely consistent—the trouble taken to educate Munirah has nothing of religious force about it, and reads much more as a singular anthropological experiment of a quite unemotional, indeed almost callous, kind, the spiritual purpose of 'Chele' does not seem consistent with the writing down of the whole adventure in detail. Throughout, therefore, the reader is troubled with the questions—to which no real answer is supplied—why was this done, and, above all, why, if done as described, was it afterwards made the subject of another's book ? But, unsatisfied as curiosity must be on such points, the volume remains a

very strange and at times very moving description of an eventful pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Islam.

* * *

Another book of travel in strange places is *The Dangerous Islands* (Michael Joseph, 15s. n.)—the record by Clifford Gessler of his experiences in Polynesia, notably in Tepuka in the Paumotu Archipelago. 'Dangerous' now these Polynesian islands can hardly be said to be, and life on most of them has been more than once described of recent years; Mr. Gessler did not 'go native' as did his compatriot, Robert Dean Frisbie, who wrote 'The Book of Puka-Puka', and does not therefore identify himself as completely with the primitive simplicity of the islanders' life; but he describes it all with sympathy, knowledge, and picturesque force, and his book is a relief from the troubles and perplexities of this so-called much more civilised world.

* * *

One more book—a novel that has yet, as far as I have noticed, attracted little attention—it is in consequence all the more worth commending here. It is called, the one slightly unsatisfactory thing about it, *The Heathen* (Seizin—Constable, 7s. 6d.) and it is a first novel by Honor Wyatt. It is very unusual and from first to last deeply interesting, a brilliant study of a peculiar character who prefers things to people. It is worth a score of the ordinary novels of to-day, written with a control and precision, every little point being quietly, yet decisively, made, that is as unusual in a first novel as the whole theme and treatment are unusual. A piece of work on which the author is very cordially to be felicitated.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC, NO. 168.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 30th October.

' Well,

' Your ——— beat into ———, you tell,
What we felt only ;'

1. ' You have beheld how they
With wicker arks did come
To kiss and ——— away
The richer cowslips home.'
2. ' I am a girl in trouble for his sake with whom I fly,
And, O, may no other maiden know such ——— as I !'
3. ' Deep in fern on ——— Beacon
Courting through the summer's day !'
4. ' Yet ev'n these bones from ——— to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh.'
5. ' Nor spell nor charm.
Come our lovely lady ——— ;'
6. ' She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad ——— bore her far away.'

Answer to Acrostic 166, August number : ' Would I have broke this happy *dream*, It was a *theme* For reason' (John Donne : ' The Dream').
1. *DusT* (Thomas Jordan : ' Let us drink and be merry'). 2. *Rough* (Shakespeare : ' Under the Greenwood Tree'). 3. *ErE* (Sir Richard Fanshawe : ' A Rose'). 4. *AntheM* (' Gray's Elegy'). 5. *MorE* (Wordsworth : ' Upon Westminster Bridge').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss Ursula Low, 25 Wetherby Gardens, S.W.5, and Mrs. Usherwood, 20 St. Hilda's Terrace, Whitby, who are invited to choose books, as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER 1937.

OF POOR MR. KING, JOHN MILTON, AND
CERTAIN FRIENDS.

BY SIR CHARLES OMAN.

EVERYONE has read John Milton's *Lycidas*, a perfect thing, which in its 200 and odd lines contains about as many 'familiar quotations' as the five Acts of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The 'Vision of the Guarded Mount,' the 'tangles of Neaera's hair,' 'the Pilot of the Galilean Lake,' 'to-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new,' 'the last infirmity of noble minds,' 'the blind fury with the abhorred shears,' will remain enshrined in our memories for ever. But how few have read *Lycidas* not as an isolated literary phenomenon, but in sequence with the two scores of other screeds—poems I cannot call them—in whose company it originally appeared: It is not very easy to do so, for the little volume of Cambridge effusions on the drowning of Mr. Edward King of Christ's College in the Irish Sea is not an easy thing to find. The strenuous seeker may make out his application-ticket, and draw it from the shelves of the British Museum, the Bodleian, or the Cambridge University Library, but if he wished to purchase a copy for himself he would have to pay some £400 or £450 sterling. Hence everyone knows *Lycidas*, but few know the companions of *Lycidas*—coupled with him in the discreet small octavo published by Buck and Daniels, the University printers, in February or March, 1637-8. I should not myself have made their acquaintance if All Souls' College did not happen to possess a copy, neatly bound in brown leather by some Fellow of the period, who took the trouble to fill in the cryptic initials at the end of

each item with the full name of the writer : J. M. of Christ's is the very last in the series. Of the majority of J. M.'s fellow-contributors one can only say that their memories would have been better served if their full names had never been rescued. For while they strove to be pathetic they were generally absurd, in one way or another, and sometimes absolutely rebarbative. David Masson, who had read them all, describes their productions as 'varied rubbish' : having done the same feat myself, I have come to the conclusion that this rubbish is so marvellous, as showing the depths of banality to which the fluent Academic muse could descend, that it is well worthy of a short review for the delight of all lovers of the grotesque and the inappropriate. Not one but several of Mr. King's friends might dispute the bays (or the wooden spoon :) with Edward Benlowes, their contemporary, whom Wharton pronounced 'the world's worst poet.'

The most intriguing thing about them is that they harp on almost every string that Milton touched, but always out of harmony, and make, between them, allusions to every ancient water-legend that Milton worked into his lament, but always with lapses into pedantry and bad taste. One should not choose a dirge for a friend when one wishes to display one's extensive and peculiar knowledge of the obscurer pages of the Classical Dictionary. Seventeenth-century scholars did not appreciate the fact : even Milton himself made 'sleek Parrope' and 'sage Hippotades' stray into his elegy on Mr. King.

The detestable custom of compiling collections of obituary poems, concerning one who was obviously an acquaintance rather than a dear friend of many of the contributors, was not new in the Cambridge of 1637—or anywhere else in Europe. It was indeed only one of many methods by which

poets and poetasters strove to get into print. And it endured into the eighteenth century, to produce compilations like the funerary verses on Frederic Prince of Wales—on whom the verse-mongers did not agree with the Tory verdict that ‘ Since it’s only Fred, who was alive and is dead, there’s no more to be said.’ Obituary verse was only one of several symptoms of the poetic urge at Cambridge, which produced co-operative effusions on the birth of the Princess Mary (1631), or the visit (not a very happy one) of Charles I to Scotland in 1633. It was, perhaps, by some special working of Nemesis that Mr. King, who had contributed very uninspired Latin iambics to both of the above-named collections, was to be himself the subject of dreadful threnodies in 1637.

According to John Milton, his friend ‘ knew himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.’ Corroborative evidence for King’s poetic capacity is unfortunately lacking, for in the certain quantity of his fragments which chance to have been preserved, the ‘ building of the lofty rhyme ’ seems to mean no more than correct scansion—certainly not inspired invention of ideas. As Masson remarked, after careful perusal of them, ‘ there is little poetry in the thought, and an obstetric plainness of phrase, excusable perhaps in verse made from the dictionary, but which the taste^e of the true muse would certainly have avoided.’

But Mr. King’s deplorable shipwreck on some rock of the Welsh coast, as he sailed from Chester to Dublin, was one more opportunity for the poetasters of Cambridge, who had been forced to sing of late on topics of a less heart-rending sort. He was a well-known figure in Academic circles, and, what was not too common in the University life of the earlier seventeenth century, he was extremely well connected. His father had been Secretary for Ireland, his

elder sister had married Lord Charlemont, his younger sister Lord Justice Loder, his uncle and godfather was a bishop—if only an Irish bishop. While English literary men at large were inditing their dirges on Ben Jonson, who died only four days before Mr. King's disaster, the Cambridge clique produced their rival set of laments on their own local celebrity. It was decidedly polyglot—even more effusions in Latin than in English, and even with three copies in Greek. Somehow these folks induced J. M. of Christ's to lend his pen—does the fact that *Lycidas* is the very last of the whole set of copies of verses imply that he was drawn in to the scheme when it was already nearly complete? Or is it conceivable that the editing-committee were dimly conscious that their collection lacked something by way of a finale, and that the author of *Il Penseroso* had a pleasant melancholy touch of his own, when it pleased him to be mournful. Had he not written some years back elegiac verses on the deaths of a Vice-Chancellor and an Esquire-bedel? It had to be remembered, perhaps with some searchings of mind, that Edward King had been given the fellowship at Christ's to which Milton might have aspired at the end of his University career, and that not by a free election but by a royal interference. King Charles, by a not uncommon but deplorable practice, had written to the governing body of the College that it was his royal intention that a fellowship then about to fall vacant should be given to a hopeful Bachelor of Arts named Edward King, 'notwithstanding any statute ordinance or constitution to the contrary.' And the College had obeyed. It would have been not unnatural that John Milton might have cherished some grudge not only against his royal master, but also against his nominee, who was several years his junior in standing. But he consented to join the choir of obituary versifiers: the

disappointment had fallen several summers back, and must have been forgiven if not forgotten. But I cannot but feel that an obvious artificiality in the lament for *Lycidas*, couched in the semblance of the regrets of an Arcadian shepherd for his comrade, not in those of a Cambridge Master of Arts for his co-graduate, has a certain reticence of real emotion. The taste of the age may account for something in the form—but many of the other versifiers had not shrunk from giving the personal note—usually in most deplorable doggerel—though some had employed the same classical machinery that Milton himself adopted. Clearly the monosyllable King is less euphonious than the trisyllabic *Lycidas*—but this matter of taste did not appeal to all poets.

A certain American humorist, well known in my young days, wrote a most harrowing description of the agonies of an after-dinner orator, who had arranged his little screed around three very telling anecdotes. To his dismay each of three preceding speakers had introduced one of these anecdotes as the climax of his contribution to the amusement of the evening. I cannot but feel that Mr. Milton experienced something in the way of a parallel emotion when the full copy of *Obsequies to the Memory of Mr. Edward King* reached him at Holton in March, 1638. For the other mourners had cribbed his most choice conceits, and had mis-handled them horribly. Take for example the exquisite lines of *Lycidas* where the Arcadian shepherd wonders why the sea-nymphs had not been at hand to save Mr. King from drowning.

‘Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o’er the head of our loved *Lycidas*?’

Mr. Milton speculated on their absence on the ‘shaggy top of Mona’ or ‘by Deva’s wizard stream.’

But the same idea had occurred to Isaac Olivier, M.A., of Queens'. To him also had come the notion that Mr. King should have been saved by some sort of a marine miracle.

*'Why did not some officious dolphin hie
To be his ship and pilot through the fry
Of wondering water-nymphs?'*

But Mr. Olivier held that a parallel to Arion's good fortune with the Dolphin was prevented precisely because the water-nymphs *were* there. They were fascinated by the swimmer's personal beauty, and hung on to him with fatal results.

*'They loved his body still too much,
And would retain some virtue by his touch:
They clung too fast, and would not let him go'!*

So he had the fate of Hylas and not that of Arion!

And again Mr. Milton, somewhat abashed by the ruthlessness of poor Edward's end, finds comfort in the fact that his friend has, after all,

*'Mounted high
Through the dear night of Him that walked the waves,
To the blest Kingdom meek of joy and love.'*

The same paradox of grief changed to heavenly joy occurred to Mr. Joseph Beaumont of Peterhouse, who thought at first that King was too great a favourite of heaven to get casually drowned.

*'When first this news, rough as the sea
From whence it came, began to be
Sighed out by fame, my stupid fears
Would not awake, but, fostering still
The calm opinion of my will,
I said 'the sea doth still remain
Subject to Him, who never wrought
A piece so fair to wash it out.'*

But when it became all too certain that the disaster had occurred, the only solution must be that 'heaven covets such celestial flowers' and that earth must be content to have bred them. So like Milton he may acquiesce in assigning his friend to the 'solemn troops and sweet societies' of all the Saints above.

J. M. brought in among the mourners the local river-god—'Camus, reverend sire, his mantle hairy and his bonnet sedge'—to speak his single line 'Ah, who hath reft—quoth he—my dearest pledge?' What must have been the poet's pain when he found that 'R. C.'—one of the few versifiers who remains unidentified—had not only introduced father Cam but made him ridiculous? He appears (in Latin) taunting the Ocean for its cruelty, and swearing that he will never again send down his waters to the sea; nothing can expiate the slaughter of Mr. King.

*'Exprobat ille fretis, invidiamque facit.
Ipse negabo meas post hoc tibi ducere lymphas,
Ah! Scelus unda tuum nulla piare potest.'*

R. C. does not seem to have reflected that if Cam refused to discharge his stream seaward, disastrous inundations must have made the survival of Cambridge University difficult or even impossible.

Again, speculations as to the fate of a drowned corpse are not an altogether pleasant topic. There have been those who consider even Ariel's fantastic hypothesis as to the destiny of the remains of Alonso King of Naples as a little gruesome: 'sea-changes' are unpleasant to think about. Milton dared greatly, and doubted, in glorious lines, whether the body of Edward King was being 'hurled beyond the stormy Hebrides' or swept

*'Where the great vision of the Guarded Mount
Looks to Naumancos and Bayona's hold.'*

Of course the poetasters revelled in the problem, but the most original thinker of them was T. Norton of Christ's, who suggested that the Sultan of Morocco might hunt for Mr. King's remains to place in his collection of rarities.

*'Then quit thine own, thou Western Moor,
And haste thee to the Northern shore!
In th' Irish sea a jewel lies
Which thy whole cabinet outvies.'*

Mr. Milton sought his inspiration for a dirge in Arcady : not so Mr. J. More of Corpus Christi, who had evidently been studying the Greek Tragedians, e.g. the opening lines of the Hecuba, with its awful ghost.

*'I do not come like one affrighted from
The shades infernal, or some troubled tomb,
Nor like the sad First Messenger to wound
By telling how and who is lately drowned.
I have no startled hair, nor eyeballs who
See all things double, and report them so.'*

Turning down suddenly from this lurid and ungrammatical preface Mr. More finally 'seeks reason and not passion' and finally comes to the rather banal conclusion that all men must make the last inevitable passage from life to death—

*'Pardon me, reader, if I say he's gone
That self same journey, but a watery one.'*

Far less reasonable is Mr. R. Brown of St. John's, who can only ingeminate a curse on water at large :

*'Pour out your tears then, pour out all your tide,
All water is pernicious since King died !'*

The logical conclusion would seem to be that if all water is pernicious, it would be proper to abstain from its use—

possibly washing in the element should be avoided ; but as to the daily potation necessary to sustain life, at least plain cold water should be eschewed—would beer pass as a substitute, or is it too prone to be watery ?

Of course all poets found it needful to blame the unhappy ship which ran upon a rock in quite fair weather. John Milton is content to speak of

*' That most fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in th' eclipse and rigged with curses dark.'*

But he lays no blame on any individual. Yet ships do not run upon a rock of their own accord, or for some private ends. Milton's colleagues naturally fasten upon the master of the bark, 'sceleste vector,' and devise well-earned pains and penalties for him. Mr. J. Pullen of Magdalene, after pondering on various appropriate tortures, opts in favour of that which the tyrant Phalaris inflicted upon the artificer Perillus—a nice recondite allusion from the classical dictionary, rather than Prometheus's agonies on Caucasus. Incidentally he wishes that the Irish Sea itself might be put in chains, such as Xerxes inflicted on the Hellespont, and that the fatal rock might be doomed to perpetual fog and frost. Difficult things to manage, even for Phœbus and the gods above.

I have reserved as my last gleanings from the *Obsequies* two sets of verses which seem more hopelessly inappropriate for the occasion than any of the rest. The first is by Dr. J. Hayward, a canon of Lichfield, who addresses his offering to Mr. King's younger sister Margaret, wife of Lord Justice Loder. Only the first six lines allude to the lady's recent loss : the remaining find comfort in the fact that she is a most regular and punctual churchgoer, and not tainted with Puritan dislike for cathedral services.

' With joy I recollect and think upon
 Your reverent church-like devotion.
 Who by your fair example did excite
 Churchmen and clerks to do their duty right.
 And by frequenting that most sacred quire
 Taught many how to heaven they might aspire.
 For our cathedrals, to the beamless eye,
 Are quires of angels in Epitome.
 Maugre the "blatant beast" that cries them down
 As savouring of superstition.
 Misguided people ! But your own sweet self
 Madam, you never dashed against that shelf.'

The screed ends with an astounding piece of snobbery.

' Nature hath given you beauty of the skin,
 Like a King's daughter : Nature, Grace, and Name
 Concurring all to raise your virtuous fame.
 Which may you long enjoy below, till Jove
 Call you to your blest pedigree above !'

But why should Jove preside over the reunion of the souls of the King family in heaven, in verses penned by a canon-residentiary of Lichfield Cathedral ? Some phrase a little more Christian might have been expected from a dignitary of the Established Church, with a sound appreciation of Laudian ritual. But, of course, 'Jove' is a fatally easy rhyme to 'above.'

But all examples of tastelessness in this collection seem insignificant beside those of Mr. John Cleveland of Christ's—a person not utterly forgotten like the rest, for he won some fame a few years later by being one of the few desperate royalists in the University of Cambridge, and suffered many things for his loyalty—including a long captivity after the surrender of Newark in 1646. But as a versifier he was deplorable. Aiming after quaint conceits, he lapsed into what one can only call buffoonery.

*'I am no poet : my pen's the spout
Where the rain-water of my eyes runs out,
In pity of that name whose fate we see
Thus copied out in grief's Hydrography.
The Muses are not Mermaids—though upon
King's death the Ocean might turn Helicon.'*

The Ocean, he says, lacked culture before it engulfed Edward King—

*'Books, Arts, and tongues were wanting : now in thee
Neptune has got a University.
We of the gown our libraries must toss
To understand the greatness of our loss.
We'll issue forth and vent such elegies
As that our tears shall swell the Irish seas,
We floating islands, living Hebrides.'*

Any more ridiculous conceit than that of Cambridge M.A.'s bobbing about as living islands in a sea of their own tears, while venting elegies, it is hard to conceive.

And what did Mr. Milton make of it all ? Republishing *Lycidas* alone and in his own name, in 1645, he wrote by way of preface, that 'the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in the Irish Sea, 1637, and by occasion foretold the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.' Arcady forgotten, he could only remember of his poem the lines where St. Peter denounces false shepherds:

'The hungry sheep look up and are not fed'

while their guardians'

*'lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scannell pipes of wretched straw.'*

How many readers of *Lycidas* to-day understand that this is a satire on the Laudian Clergy ? Not all, I fear.

THE DRUG SMUGGLERS OF EGYPT.

BY C. S. JARVIS.

IN the early part of the nineteenth century, during the Napoleonic wars and for some thirty years afterwards, it is said that every English Channel fisherman was a smuggler when the opportunity offered, and many of them in fact made their own opportunities and were fishermen only as a blind to their real calling. The Preventive forces were faced with two very grave difficulties : the Deal and other coast-town fishermen possessed such fast and handy craft that it was impossible to devise anything propelled by wind to outsail them, and every inhabitant of these fishing villages was definitely pro-smuggler and anti-Prevention.

Very much the same state of affairs has existed in the deserts of Egypt for the last thirty to forty years, as every nomad Arab of the deserts is a potential smuggler and most of them possess exceedingly fast-trotting 'nagas' (she-camels) that can outstrip the Government animals ; and it goes without saying that every member of the tribes is lock, stock, and barrel with the contrabandists and not particularly helpful to the police. The Arab also has a definite advantage over the Channel fisherman of a hundred years ago, for the commodity in which he deals is the light and easily transported drug, hashish, and a ten-pound load of this is all that he need carry to make a handsome profit, whereas the British smuggler, if the run was to be a financial success, had to deal in heavy goods such as casks of brandy and wine.

The hashish which the inhabitants of the Nile Valley use

is a product of the hemp and when manufactured provides a narcotic that, smoked in a pipe or drunk mixed with coffee, has both a stimulating and soporific effect. That is to say, the consumer experiences a feeling of well-being and all his cares and fatigue slip away from his shoulders, while the world for the time being seems a much brighter and more satisfactory place in which to live. The following morning there is, of course, the resulting 'hangover,' and the hashish head is of a very much fatter and more painful variety than that provided by whisky or champagne, or even a mixture of the two, which, on the principle of 'grape on grape and malt on malt,' is the worst thing one can do ; but the prospect of the 'hangover' has never yet proved efficacious as a deterrent.

Hashish in moderation did very little permanent harm, but heavy smokers became affected in time, the drug causing dullness and stupidity and in extreme cases insanity, and so the Egyptian Government prohibited its import and use absolutely. One of the results of this was that in the years immediately after the War the 'white drugs,' cocaine, heroin, etc., were introduced into the country and immediately became most popular, so that an alarming proportion of the population became confirmed addicts. The white drug is a very much easier commodity to smuggle than hashish as, being of considerable value, a minute parcel only need be carried to make a trafficking expedition a success, and most of this smuggling was carried out at the three big ports of Egypt—Alexandria, Port Said, and Suez. Every available device was employed, from the simple method of dropping a package from a ship's side into a waiting boat, to concealing the drug in ordinary merchandise and passing it through Customs. Heroin was hidden in every known commodity, from the legs of chairs to the

heels of shoes, from sacks of rice to bottles of beer; a particularly disgraceful episode being the arrest of a senior Consular official of a Great Power attempting to land at Alexandria with a despatch-case, normally immune from Customs inspection, which was found to be filled not with State papers but with packages of drugs.

It is exceedingly difficult to deal with an evil of this description when a successful run with one small suit-case is sufficient to supply a city as large as Cairo with its normal demand for one week, and the profits in the trade were further increased by the adulteration of the drug with boracic or rice powder on arrival. One of the few cases on record where adulteration, so far from being a misdemeanour, becomes almost a righteous act. The trade was finally stopped or reduced to quite reasonable proportions by the Commandant of the Cairo Police who, being charged with the task of dealing with the situation, did what no man has ever done before—he got up on his feet at Geneva and told the League of Nations the stark and lamentable truth. He said very plainly that certain countries, not addicted to white drugs themselves, were producing enormous quantities of heroin and cocaine and shipping them to smaller states regardless of the fact that they were utterly ruining the people of those small states. He not only named those countries responsible, but he produced documentary and irrefutable evidence. It was all very painful and regrettable, for this Police Officer did not understand the correct technique to be observed at Geneva, where the ~~rule~~ is that the truth should be so discreetly veiled and distorted that no one can recognise it. He was, however, quite unrepentant and irreconcilable, and after two or three more cold douches of the unvarnished truth the delegates concerned at the League took such steps that further deplorable

episodes were unnecessary, and the white drug traffic to all intents and purposes ceased.

There remained, however, the smuggling of hashish, and attempts to stop this are very much like amateurish efforts at damming a stream with earth—immediately one has stopped up one weak spot, the water breaks through in another place. It is quite impossible for Egypt with her lengthy frontiers to maintain a water-tight system of patrols and barriers on every length of coast or mile of desert where hashish might be run, and so there is a constant game of chess between the contrabandists and anti-contrabandists, the smugglers moving their knights and pawns to any open spaces on the Government's chess-board of defence, and the Police and Coastguards countering the moves by redistribution of their pieces.

If the Sinai Camel Police become too vigilant and energetic there is a sudden cessation of runs across the Peninsula, but no falling off in the supply of the drug in Cairo and the cities, and then it transpires that the smuggling fraternity are sending hashish down the Gulf of Akaba by launch or sailing boat and transshipping it to the boats of the Suez fishermen at the apex of the Peninsula. Alternatively, small steamers may carry a load to the desert west of Alexandria and hand it over to camelmen there, or the deserted sea marshes of Damietta may be used for landings, for which they are eminently suitable.

When hashish is carried by sea it is usually placed in waterproof or rubber bags and each parcel is made fast to a small sack of salt. The reason for this is that if the boat carrying the drug should be chased by a coastguard cruiser or launch the cargo is dropped overboard. The weight of the bag of salt will cause it to sink at once, but in two days' time, when the salt has disintegrated in the

water, the bags will rise to the surface again, to be picked up by the smugglers or their friends who will keep a close look-out in the area.

The most exciting smuggling episodes, however, occur in Sinai, where the contrabandists have to run the drug by camel across a hundred and fifty miles of desert, most of which is broken gravel and limestone plateau with thirty miles of sand dunes immediately bordering on the Suez Canal. The drug comes from Syria and is transported to Southern Palestine either by boat, motor-car, or on camels or donkeys. The Palestinians as a race are not addicted to hashish and therefore the trade does not concern Palestine to any great extent. The police of that country have their hands fairly full at all times and cannot be expected to take a vast interest in the transport of a drug not intended for their own country. Actually many seizures are made, but as the Egyptian Government are too short-sighted to encourage them by paying the same rewards to the Palestine Police as they do to their own forces, there is really no reason why the authorities should exert themselves in any way over a contraband trade that does not actively harm their own country.

The organisation concerned with hashish smuggling consists of three parties: the Big Men, or 'Drug Barons,' who provide the funds and reap most of the profits; the middlemen who organise the runs and engage the Arabs; and the ordinary Arab camelmen. The only people likely to be caught are the Arab smugglers, who may possibly be able to identify the middlemen later but who know nothing of the big financial powers at the head of affairs. The result is that, though evidence can sometimes be obtained to arrive at the conviction of one of the *liaison* men, the real brains and backing of the trade are seldom if ever caught.

Some ten years ago the smugglers were in the habit of running the hashish across Sinai with armed parties of from ten to fifteen men. If a police patrol was met with it seldom consisted of more than three privates with a corporal in charge, and so eight smugglers would remain behind and keep up a sustained fire with rifles on the patrol whilst the remainder of the party hurried on towards the Canal, where the drug was buried till arrangements could be made to swim it across. One could hardly expect four men perched up on camels and moving at a jog-trot across the open to advance very energetically through a hail of bullets fired at them by marksmen hiding behind rocks. The police were paid only £2 10s. a month and the reward for the capture of hashish was a miserable four shillings a kilo, the real value of which was in the neighbourhood of £25. Under these conditions one did not look for 'deeds that made the Empire's name,' and the police usually satisfied honour by following the party at a discreet distance and doing their best later to locate the buried hashish on the Canal bank.

Then the police force was reorganised and the majority of the men in the Peninsula were stationed at various posts in Central Sinai, so that when the alarm was rung up on the telephone upwards of eighty men could converge on the smugglers from all points of the compass. At this stage of the proceedings the smugglers' secret service must have been at fault, or long immunity from serious attack had made them contemptuous of the police, for a run of sixteen camels with ten men started out from the Palestine frontier shortly after the new dispositions had been completed.

If the smugglers' contempt of the new grouping of the police was justified, their omission to acquaint themselves with another and more human factor affecting the *élan* of

the anti-contrabandist forces showed a very surprising ignorance of human nature on their part. There happened to be several vacancies for non-commissioned officers of all ranks in the police force and word had gone forth that in making the necessary promotions the zeal shown in action against the smugglers would be taken into consideration. Moreover, the reward for hashish had been trebled and there was in addition a special grant of £10 for every man captured and £5 for his camel. This put an entirely different complexion on affairs and a policeman was fully entitled to risk his life if three stripes and some £20 in cash was set in the balance against it.

The smugglers, all unconscious of the change in the situation, were met by a small patrol some twenty miles north of Kosseima and received the shock of their lives when four men charged their firing-line on racing camels, capturing two of their party and three heavily laden camels after a hand-to-hand fight. The remainder made off post-haste to the broken country north of Hellal Mountain, but word had gone forth by telephone that smugglers were on the move and their way to the Canal was barred. Wherever they emerged from the cover of the mountain gorges they saw moving in the low desert either the black head-ropes and white shawls of the police or the khaki turbans of the Camel Corps, and the Camel Corps were Sudanese ; not a match for the Arabs in brain or cunning, perhaps, but very redoubtable fighters armed with rifle and, unlike the police, with the bayonet also showing always a most regrettable desire to get to close quarters and use that bayonet.

Finally the remaining eight men took to the mountains, leaving their camels to be captured by the police, and an epic fight took place among the boulders on the hillsides,

in which one policeman and one smuggler were killed and two policemen wounded. The policeman who was killed showed the most reckless courage ; he and three others were lying among the rocks firing at four of the smugglers who were under cover about seventy yards away. The Corporal in charge of the party, after an exchange of shots lasting a few minutes, was hit through the arm and the policeman, a very black descendant of one of the erstwhile slaves of the Arab tribes, saw away to the flank the man who had fired the bullet. He sprang to his feet, raced across the open, and shot the smuggler through the head at a distance of five yards. As he did so he was hit by three bullets from the remaining men, one of which severed his femoral artery, and the gallant fellow died of loss of blood before help could reach him.

The whole of this party of Arabs, with their load of hashish, were captured and brought into El Arish, where they were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, manslaughter figuring on the charges as well as smuggling, and this put an effective end to all attempts to get hashish across Sinai by force of arms. About this time also the traffic was made even more hazardous for the smugglers by the invention by Dunlops of what is known as the 'Low-Pressure' tyre. Previous to the invention the car patrols of the Province had been equipped with the ordinary $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch covers which were useless in sand, but the new tyres had a tread of 9 inches and were pumped up to a pressure of ten pounds only. This very simple device meant that the cars could now travel at speed through the sand country east of the Canal where previously the smugglers had had only camel patrols to contend with.

For some time after this the Sinai desert was singularly free from hashish runs, which was partly due to the fact

that Royalty was being entertained in the Province. The connection between Royalty and hashish smuggling may not be immediately obvious, but visits of the 'Great' in the special trains offer great opportunities, as on these occasions prying officials are usually so excited about the propinquity of Royalty that the customary close inspection of trains from Palestine is not carried out at Kantara, the Canal terminus. Actually, however, the lack of attention was not all that the smuggling fraternity hoped, for, though the officials of King Fuad's special train got away with a vast quantity of the smuggled drug, those of the Princess Royal of England and Lord Lloyd, the High Commissioner of Egypt, were not so lucky and their consignments were captured! As the discovery of hashish in a train means the imprisonment of the man immediately responsible, together with the discharge from the railway service of any official who might in any way be connected with the attempt, the use of the Palestine Railways as a means of conveying hashish never became very popular, though consignments have been found from time to time in such places as the lining of refrigerator waggons, the sand boxes of the engines, and in a small grease receptacle in the vicinity of the buffers.

The obvious route across the high plateau of Sinai having become unhealthy, and the rigid search to which all trains were subjected making the use of the Palestine Railways an unprofitable proceeding, there was what one might call a dead silence in the smuggling world, and when a dead silence ensues one may be very certain that a new and easy route has been discovered. Information came of cars running from Amman in Trans-Jordan to the village of Akaba on the gulf of that name, for no apparent reason, and it transpired that hashish was being shipped from

Akaba in boats and landed on the deserted shores on the Sinai side, where it was run through the deep gorges of the granite mountains to the Gulf of Suez, to be handed over to fishermen who transferred it to the western side. Here a further party of Arabs ran it through the Red Sea mountains to the Nile Valley in the vicinity of Helouan.

The trade must have been very extensive, for immediately the patrolling system was altered a large capture was made by the Camel Corps in the desert east of Cairo and the Sinai Police had a very exciting little fight on the Gulf of Suez. A patrol of six men moving along the shore at night came upon an Arab dhow being laden with hashish ; the load had just been placed on board, so the fishermen made the most frantic attempts to push off their boat from the shore whilst the Arabs, who had carried it across the Peninsula, scaled the cliff and opened a heavy fire on the police.

The police, knowing they had very little chance of hitting an Arab behind a rock when they had nothing to aim at but the flashes from rifles, very wisely devoted their attention to the boat, which had just been pushed off into deep water. They fired a volley at it, killing the man who was hoisting the sail, whereupon the crew surrendered and came ashore with over a hundred kilos of the drug. Leaving two men to guard the boat and prisoners, the remainder of the patrol pushed off after the Arabs and succeeded in capturing two of them with their camels. The only remarkable part about this episode was that according to the evidence given by the police the Arabs were unarmed when captured but that two rifles were found on the fishermen in the boat. The police were all so emphatic and so very clear on this point that the real truth was obvious ; the fishermen in the boat were, of course, unarmed, and this being

so, according to the queer laws of the anti-contraband service, the police were only authorised to fire into the air, a fairly fatuous proceeding when the boat full of contraband was pushing off from the shore. Having disobeyed this order in a very good cause, the sensible thing to do, to avoid any awkward questions, was to get hold of a recently discharged rifle and put it in the boat. This apparently explained the most energetic hunt after the Arab camelmen as soon as the whole consignment of the drug had been captured, and the very emphatic and oft-reiterated evidence from all the police that most of the firing had come from the boat and not from the Arabs on the cliff-side. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the case, this smugglers' route lost its popularity after this episode, for the very simple reason that no fishermen could be found who would risk their lives on the Sinai shores for the very inadequate compensation of £1 a head for a boat's crew engaged in the dangerous task of shipping hashish across the Gulf.

Then it transpired that the Sinai Arabs were becoming what one might call 'dressy.' As a race they normally go barefooted except when trekking over rough granite or limestone mountains, when they wear home-made sandals of goatskin—precisely the same form of footwear as that worn by the Patriarchs of the Old Testament. Those who cherish all the old-time customs of the nomad Arab will be horrified to learn that the goatskin sandal is now rapidly going out of fashion and being replaced by a strip of worn-out Dunlop tyre cover. It makes a most suitable sole for a nomad's shoe, but at first its use caused a considerable amount of excitement owing to 'car tracks' being seen in places where, by reason of scarps, cliffs and passes, no car could possibly run. Until the mystery was explained one

began to believe in some phantom desert Ford that was haunting the uplands of Sinai and Trans-Jordan after its disintegration on the rough going of the Wilderness.

The Arabs of Northern Sinai, however, very seldom wear anything on their feet, as practically the whole of the area in which they move is soft sand or clay, and when, therefore, it was noticed that a large number of very innocent-looking nomads were crossing the ferry at Kantara on the Canal wearing rather smart Damascus-made sandals, people began to wonder. From wondering they advanced to examination, when it was disclosed that the soles of these sandals were not made of leather but of a specially shaped slab of hashish weighing about $\frac{3}{4}$ lb., which meant that for some time every individual wearing shoes had been passing the Customs barrier with $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of the drug on his feet. Apparently the 'drug barons' expected this clever ruse to hold good for considerably longer than it did, as hashish, fashioned in the shape of the sole of a sandal, figured in captures for years after the device had been exposed.

After the sandal method had failed there was another period of ominous silence on the Sinai front, accompanied by a big drop in the price of the drug in Cairo. The current price of hashish is easily ascertained, and when there is what financiers call a weakening in the price it is a very sure sign that there is no shortage on the market, and these fluctuations act as a barometer to the anti-contraband officials.

Then one day a highly delighted patrol of Sinai Police came in to El Arish, the Province Headquarters, with a large drove of camels and tethered to each mounted patrolman were three Arabs with ropes round their necks. The ladies of the village swarmed up on the housetops and, hearing from their police husbands as they passed that there

would be ' mukhaffas ' (rewards) that day and fat sheep to eat that night, with possibly a gold ornament for a pretty and recent wife, set up their shrill ululations of joy.

It appeared that a big drove of ' meat ' camels consigned to the butchers of Cairo had passed the frontier at Rafa as all correct, but at Sheikh Zowaid twelve miles farther on had met a police patrol who had ridden among the drove of camels to make certain there were no parcels of hashish hidden in their loads. One man, struck by the fine white wool of one of the camels, had gripped a handful of hair by the hump and there had come away in his hand a slab of hashish ! A hole in the thick wool had been carefully clipped out by hair clippers, on to the bare skin of the camel a slab of hashish had been affixed by glue, and on the outer side of the slab the hair had been attached by the same method, the patch being carefully combed over so that no outward signs were visible.

Every camel in the drove was carrying six slabs of half a kilo each and, with a reward of £10 a head for every drover, the sale price of the confiscated camels, plus the ordinary monetary payment for the hashish, the small patrol of three men were definitely in the Croesus class for the time being, and there were sounds of great merriment and dancing that night.

Nowadays the smuggling fraternity, until they discover some new and cunning device, are running the hashish by means of fast-trotting camels ridden at night with a light load. By day the smuggler turns his camel loose to graze, while he himself, with the saddle and consignment of hashish, is hidden under a bush. As there are grazing camels over the greater part of Central Sinai, the idea is that the smuggler's animal will pass as one of the herd. Against this is the fact that the Sinai Police all have an ' eye for a

camel' and can detect the breedy blood-stock type used by the smugglers at a distance of a mile. If one of these animals is noticed a close examination is made to see if there are recent saddle-marks on the hump and, if there are, a close search of the surrounding bushes will disclose the presence of a very innocent and plausible gentleman sitting on a consignment of the drug.

The Arabs who swim the Suez Canal with the hashish are not from the same tribes as those that make the run across the Peninsula. They are specially selected men from the Ayada tribe whose 'darak' (area) is on the Canal bank, and they are all very fine and very silent swimmers. On the western bank of the Canal are stationed Egyptian Coast-guards who patrol the whole hundred-mile length, but the swimmers have little difficulty in evading these slow-moving infantrymen. The smuggler hides in the east bank till the big searchlight from a passing steamer shows up the patrol waiting on the far side and then, having located the danger-spot, slips into the water and swims across in the wash of the vessel, the noise of the waves drowning any sound he may make.

The feeling that exists between the officers of the anti-contraband forces and the smugglers might almost be described as cordial, and their attitude one to the other is rather similar to that which existed between the French and English officers during the Peninsular War. When there is work afoot it is war to the knife, but between runs a famous Arab smuggler will bandy jokes with members of the police over their failure to capture some big consignment.

At the local Agricultural Show which is held at El Arish every year I had complained about the quality of the camels in the 'Hageen' or fast-trotting class and had said they

were not up to the standard I had expected. I was assured by a warrant officer of the police that if I would give my word to 'play the game' all the leading smugglers of Sinai would be delighted to come in and show their camels in this class. In due course a foxy-looking Arab, who had served five years in the local prison for smuggling, was produced and, having assured him that no underhand tricks would be played, there was as the result the most marvellous entry of camels that year. It was most interesting to see the beautiful breedy animals that were produced and still more interesting to meet their owners, many of whom were old friends, as they had 'done time' in the prison and probably would do so again in the near future. It struck me as distinctly Gilbertian when at the prize-giving many of the leading smugglers of Egypt came up and received a monetary reward for possessing an animal used exclusively for law-breaking !

The only occasion on which a 'drug baron' was convicted for smuggling in Sinai was when a middleman was arrested on the strength of his footprints being detected among a crowd of fishermen and Arabs on the sand of the seashore. A very big consignment of hashish from Syria had been landed and sixteen Arabs and twelve fishermen were concerned in the run. The whole load was captured by the police some two days' trek from the coast, and there was nothing really remarkable about the run beyond the fact that the trackers became most excited because among the many footprints at the spot where the hashish was landed were those of a man who always wore shoes. To an ordinary man this muddled mass of tracks made by bare feet all looked precisely the same, but to the skilled trackers the prints left by the Effendi—the gentleman who wore European clothes and shoes normally—stood out as

if they had been painted vermilion. He was not wearing shoes at the time, be it noted, but the fact that he was in the habit of doing so was obvious as the sun in the sky.

In due course the gentleman in question was arrested, and proved to be a well-to-do resident of El Arish who always seemed to be in funds although he had no visible means of existence. The evidence against him was not particularly strong, but there was not the slightest doubt of his guilt as the middleman who had arranged all details of the run. A senior Egyptian officer of the police, realising that here was a chance to get at the big men of the drug traffic, had this prisoner up to his house on several nights whilst awaiting trial and, having dwelt on the extreme severity of the sentence he would receive, ultimately obtained a full confession and also a promise to assist in the conviction of the real owners of the drug.

A letter was written by the middleman to his employer in Cairo stating—untruthfully—that, although the majority of the hashish had been captured by the police, the smugglers had managed to bury about a hundred kilos, and instructions as to how this was to be disposed of were asked. This letter the middleman smuggled out of prison in the ordinary way and was in due course delivered to the 'drug baron' in Cairo. He was a member of the El Azhar mosque, a man of unblemished character and great sanctity, but he was also as artful as a fox and seldom if ever wrote a letter himself. Luckily for the anti-contrabandist forces, however, this scribbled note from El Arish prison appeared to be so absolutely genuine that he allowed his avarice to get the better of his caution. He wrote a reply upbraiding his henchman for losing so much of his hashish and gave minute instructions as to the disposal of the remainder. Three days later, as he sat in his accustomed seat at his favourite

café, holding forth on religious observances, he was tapped on the shoulder and immediately surrounded by half a dozen armed police officers who hustled him into a waiting motor-car.

The incriminating letter was quite sufficient to obtain a conviction and he was awarded three years' imprisonment and a fine of £3,000. One had very little sympathy for the fat, oily creature, for, though loyalty is the keynote of the smuggling fraternity and unhappy, impoverished Arabs who earn but a pound or two for a successful run will go to prison cheerfully for three years rather than turn King's evidence and earn a remission of their sentences, this wealthy drug merchant, who had been living on the trade for twenty years, willingly gave away the remainder of the gang on the promise of a slight reduction of his sentence. By this means six more leading lights of Cairo and Alexandria were arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment and heavy fines, and for some time there was a definite shortage on the hashish market in the capital.

The trade in the drug, which started immediately the law prohibited its import some fifty years ago, will probably continue for all time unless the League of Nations can bring pressure to bear on the hashish-producing countries. It costs little or nothing to grow and will sell at from £30 to £60 a kilo in Cairo ; so that with profits such as these obtainable there will always be contrabandists prepared to run a very small risk for a large sum, and the deserts will always provide the Arabs who will run a much greater risk for little more than a day's wage. They possess no property to be sold up to pay a fine, and as to them time means nothing, a sentence of penal servitude holds no terrors and no sense of irremediable waste of life's short span

HOMUNCULUS.

I.

*If I had scaled the mountains, trod the snows
 That once I saw uplifted to the skies
 In stateliness of solitude ;
 If, striding onward, as Life's prize
 My hand had clutched the flower that grows
 A-gleam beyond the lingering line
 Of clambered fir and lofted pine ;
 If I had stood
 Above the tumult, outlined and alone,
 A central light for lifted eyes,
 Should I have known,
 Deep in the silence of my being's throne,
 The mystery and blessing that are mine ?*

II.

*If I had won by arrowy ways—
 As once I planned,
 Straining Ulysses' bow in ardent youth—
 Into the gold, the envied band ;
 If I had borne as guerdon of my days
 A nation's enterprise and praise,
 Should I be nearer now to Truth ?
 Should I the better understand
 The anguish and the ecstasy,
 The storms and sunshafts on the changing land
 That gloom and glorify*

*The pulses of humanity ?
Should I now have the mind to gaze,
By jealousy of conflict all unvexed,
On Beauty's simple text
And over many a little thing
To throw the warmth of Love's remembering ?*

III.

*If I a purple robe had worn
And dwelt at ease
Breathing the harmonies
Of mullioned mansion of ancestral fame,
The seigneur of a countryside,
My words with wide-winged influence sped ;
If I had thus been born
To garnered wealth and ancient name,
Spilling upon me all the luxuries,
Making Earth's course a game
Played wheresoever Fancy led,
How should I, eager-eyed,
Life's lasting courage claim,
The constant humours of contrivance share,
Know the long fun
That is for every one
Who learns the saving for a venture rare,
And feel with quickened heart of pride
The moving millions, Fortune's staff denied,
Whose steadfast strength far heavier burdens bear ?*

IV.

*Thanks for the nameless and the vast unknown
Made in God's image, all the yearning crowd*

*That suffer the same pains,
That bear the human yoke
In universal service dumbly bowed,
Yet gather mirth
Out of the self-same sense of joke
As comes to any King !
We little folk
That fill the valleys, jostle in the plains,
We are the myriad harvests sown
Throughout the fields of Earth,
We are the road of every travelling,
We are the source from which the great ones spring,
We are the clay
To which their plastic art they bring,
To rest on us their waves of triumph curve,
We are the end they serve,
The shore beyond the glitter of their day.*

V.

*Why should we labour with our minds a-thirst,
Beyond the labour, for the wage ?
Why strive for garlands, struggling to be first ?
Time levels all with stilly hand,
The favoured and accursed :
Even as the wind across the sand
Scurries the little hummocks, age by age
Earth's values alter, Heaven's remain.
How small a manhood's task it is to strain
Tip-toe on jealousy that we may stand
Above our fellows and engage
In rivalry not born of pride but price !
Enough and more than all*

*In this world to suffice
Not less the great mind than the small
Lies Life's one high command—
Unwhimpering yet unenvious, seek to gain
To the very end of strength the upland ways,
The journey's joy our echoing call,
That we may to our lifted selves attain,
Glad of the great wind's freedom, of the climb,
The gift of power, the will to dare,
The pageant of the passing days,
The splendours of Earth's rhyme.
We little wanderers, wistful in the maze,
We can rejoice when others have the praise
For steeples of the brain
And bask in sunshine's blaze ;
We need not fear the falling of the rain.
If ours the mountain air,
That vintage of the spirit, ever free,
No need have we to combat care
Or feel our life in vain :
Soul-borne immortally
Over Hope's boundless sea,
Our guide the morning star,
No man amongst us but can journey far.
Unscathed though we be,
We are the countless conquerors of Time—
All little momentary folk are we,
Yet all the fragments of Eternity.*

GORELL.

DARK HORSES.

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

[At Merton Magna, in East Devon, live Richard Challice, wheelwright, Ivy, his wife, Leonard, Samson, and Linda, his children, and Verity, his old mother. Simon Pye, friendly, retired neighbour, engages Richard to look after his orchard and Linda as maidservant: he makes friends with the Challices and gives Richard his dream, a piece of land on which is a disused lime-kiln. Simon's son, Gerald, visits his father and sets his snares for Linda. Gerald murderously drives over Richard as he tries to prevent Linda's elopement. After long silence Linda returns home—alone. Verity dies; Simon leaves Merton Magna.]

XX.

THE REVELATION.

SPRING brought the hawthorns into flower again and Richard heard the cuckoo and reported the first swallow glancing over the river. He took pleasure in these things, but only spoke of them to Linda. She often marvelled at his genius still to count the chickens before they were hatched.

'We must market the cherries this year,' he said when once more the great tree above the well gleamed in a May garment of blossom. 'There's going to be a bumper harvest if we fight the birds a bit—good for two pounds of money, if not more.'

He had set out his ground beside the old lime-kiln with small fruits and spent much time during the winter in making nets to cover them. He had planted half an acre with potatoes and Leonard now helped to hill them. Richard went less often to the wheelwright's shop, for he could not stand to an anvil, and after an accident and a bad burn, he obeyed his family's entreaty in this matter and only did light

work at the forge. He could blow the bellows safely enough and enjoyed great power in his arms. Work increased with the spring and farm implements came to be overhauled. He had received an order for a farm cart also and enjoyed building it. Much time he spent upon his land, and Linda joined him there when she could, sitting where Verity used to sit. Dick spoke of his mother as though she had been dead for many years, and Linda also noted that his family was beginning to fade out of his imagination. Even when with them and listening to their voices, he seemed to experience no particular interest in them. Only she was real and alive to him ; only to her he confided his eternal hopes and convictions. But he was always cheerful and enjoyed the best of physical health. His activity surprised his friends and his creditors were patient with him, for they liked the man and knew the circumstances. At times of pressure Richard would order thrift in the house and demand that less meat should be set before him ; then, when it was stinted, he had forgotten and told Ivy that men doing the physical work of himself and the boys must have their fill of beef and bacon. Leonard got work on a farm at last and hated it, but stuck to it as best he could.

Then came a night when accident restored his sons and his wife very vividly to Richard's mind again and thrust them in the forefront of his thoughts, never more to be dismissed.

On a June day he went alone after working hours to the inn and travelled upon his crutches, for he had now acquired great speed and certainty upon them and his muscles were developed to use them. They had thrust up his shoulders somewhat, but were become a part of him when he went afield. Mr. Pye's travelling chair he had never liked and used no more after Simon was gone. But he would not sell it.

Richard joined the usual throng and listened to the tale of Samuel Pink, a head gardener who worked for the lord of the manor.

'Sir George have a passion for his herbaceous border,' said Samuel Pink. 'He puts it afore the glass and everything in the place; and this year he's just found how fifty red sword-lilies was planted where he'd ordained for fifty purple ones to be put. Well, his own fault for labelling 'em wrong, and not the end of the world in any case you'd say. But he very near sacked me on it this morning! Danced round, as if a wasp had got inside his "plus fours," and asked me why he'd been born into a world of damn' fools.'

'And him the biggest zany of the lot,' said the postman.

'His sort will read the riot act sometimes, but who listens to 'em?' asked Saul.

They debated the mysterious habits and customs of the upper classes, but for the most part agreed that the proletariat would fare much better without any of them.

'The best ain't got no sense of reality,' repeated Arthur Tidy. 'They're born into a world where their money can buy everything, and they fall in a rage in a minute when they get up against something it can't buy.'

Mr. Beedell alone took the contrary line.

'The bettermost people have their place in the scheme of things,' he declared, 'and without 'em we'd be poorer, not richer; because they know how to handle money and handle us. It's in their blood through generations to do so; but the "Reds" don't know how to handle anything. When they was in power the nation shook on the verge of bankruptcy in two years and was only saved when it rose up and fired 'em. Let 'em come in again and they'll grab the capital for themselves and wreck trade and hand the nation neck and crop to the communists and ruination. Men like you,

Saul Date, would like for all the lions to be dead and all the lice prospering.'

'Better be a live louse than a dead lion anyway,' answered Saul, 'and if England can't live without robbing the poor, who cares what happens to it? Life ain't everything, I grant you that, but if we had security ourselves, most of us wouldn't care twopence about the honour and glory of the Empire. What's the Empire done for me? I'd change places with a black man, or a red man, or a yellow man tomorrow if I was promised security.'

'You've got a bee in your bonnet as to that,' said Tidy. 'Always yelping about security. Nobody's got security—rich or poor. You can't count upon a day. Men worth thousands get smashed like flies on the roads just as often as the poor. Machines kill more than wars now.'

Richard spoke to Saul.

'You say life ain't everything, Date, but you can't have nothing without it. You must be alive to start with. Life at best ain't very long, and a battle at that; but it's all we've got.'

'And not worth having anyway for most of us,' answered the other. 'When you can look forward to death without a sigh, same as I can, then you know life ain't no use and death just as good value. Them who live to be right down old pay a long price for death, be it as it will.'

'That's fair,' said Beedell, 'because death's a long business. The peace of death lasts for ever and the troubles of life are nought compared against it. Once dead, always dead—so far as this world's concerned.'

'No more of that twaddle, David,' cried Richard, 'and fill up my glass again. Death—death, you say, and call it peace! What's the peace of death to the compensations of being alive? Life is all that matters. Who'd give over so long as he can sleep sound and eat and drink hearty and

smell the rain falling on his own bit of land and keep a roof over him and a friend or two to stand by him : Their very miseries are the salt of life to some men, like you, Saul Date. Where would you stand if your grievances was took from you : You'd be lost, with nothing to cant about and nobody to curse. Life's the thing ; and if I can say that with my lost leg and my money troubles and ill-conveniences, you ought to be shamed to say life's a worthless contrivance. Give the fool another beer, David.'

So they chattered and Beedell was pleased.

'Never heard you chaps speak so intelligent as what you have to-night,' he said. 'When you're sensible, you show you've all got your wits still.'

'I'm a leader yet when anyone pleases to follow,' declared Mr. Sloggett ; 'and now one of your bright lads can lead me over the bridge, because I don't want for my fading light to be drowned yet.'

They went their way and Richard was soon at home again. He returned in good spirits and did not know that Linda was out with a neighbour. He came to his door unheard, because his crutches were shod with rubber, and he stood for a moment before pushing the door open, for he heard Ivy's quiet voice and guessed that a neighbour might be with her whom he did not desire to meet. But she was speaking to Leonard and Samson, and he knew by the note of her speech that she was pitying herself. His younger son talked of Richard.

'He'll never give up and he'll never drop out, poor old Father won't,' said Leonard. 'He's so strong as a horse and he gets so silly as a donkey nowadays. He was telling how, if he made money by them gooseberry trees and rubbish alongside the lime-kiln, he'd put a new thatch on this house !'

‘What’s the sense of saving five bob to-day if you’re going to spend five quid on the strength of it to-morrow?’ growled Samson; and then their mother spoke.

‘Be patient,’ she said, ‘be patient, same as I am. Your dear father’s our cross. He’s our cross because, in a manner of speaking, we don’t deserve him; but you must carry on and endure and be brave like your mother.’

The listener’s jaw fell and he felt perspiration break out upon his forehead. He went weak, but had strength to retreat silently. ‘They mustn’t know I’ve heard ’em,’ he thought. Then he turned softly down the garden path again and out into the road. The lich-gate was beside him and he dropped into a seat under the pent-roof. Richard found himself stunned at information so unexpected. He mopped his head and breathed heavily. For a moment he felt angry with them. ‘And haven’t I no cross to bear?’ he asked himself. But that aspect did not detain him. It was the thought of the truth set so nakedly out in the minds of others that staggered him. He tried to make light of it and failed. ‘Listeners never hear no good of themselves,’ he reflected, and tried to laugh. But he could not laugh; he could only wish that he had not heard them. ‘So like as not a lot’s said to the same tune when I’m not by,’ he thought, ‘but not for Linda to hear—that I will swear.’ This conviction comforted him. ‘She wouldn’t stand for it—not for a moment,’ Richard assured himself. And then he felt that, though she might resist them, if what they said was true, Linda must suffer as much as the rest.

The instinct of the man was always to hide an affront, because he knew the less you talk about such a thing the quicker you forget it. In the same manner he liked to pursue his own purposes alone, so that no others might be involved in them if failure followed.

He decided now to say nothing to anybody.

' 'Tis a case for forgiving and forgetting as quick as I may. So like as not I didn't hear 'em properly,' he thought.

As he rose, emerged and prepared to go home, he saw Linda and they met and came in together.

' You're late,' she said, '—getting a regular old night bird, Father.'

' We was setting the world to rights at "The Cat and Fiddle," ' he told her, ' and most of us agreed that, by and large, 'twas better to be alive than not. I ought to have minded a thing I heard Mr. Pye say on that subject long ago. But it didn't come in my thoughts pat.'

' And what did he say ? ' asked Linda. ' He wasn't what you might call very much in love with being alive.'

' He was not—not always. But he'd peep out of his shell a bit more hopeful sometimes on a hot, sunny morning when he weren't aching overmuch. I went in one day after his breakfast to tell about the orchard, and he was reading *The Times* newspaper, which he always did do first thing. "Just having a look at the lucky ones, Dick," he said, and I thought he was running his eyes over they wills and bequests they put in the papers and said so. "No," answered Mr. Pye. "The obituary columns, Dick. The dead." '

Linda protested.

' That didn't suit you, I know. I'm same as you. You and me will live for years and years and years, Father. You'll live to see my hair grey, I expect, and I'll live to see your beautiful hair gone.'

Richard was greatly cheered.

' You couldn't have said a word to suit me better,' he declared.

Then they came in together and Ivy smiled on them.

XXI.

A WAY DISCOVERED.

His revelation sobered Richard Challice considerably and he found himself unable to forget it. In this new light life took on another colour and he found himself regarding it from a novel point of view. As the angle of vision changes the salients and contours of a familiar scene, so now the everyday spectacle of his own existence, its hopes and fears, became as a country unexplored. He was in a new land wherein dwelt strange inhabitants. Suddenly his wife and his sons seemed to emerge from the twilight into which they had sunk and became ever present for him, as much alive as himself and possessing all the demands and rights of every fellow human being. Seen thus Richard was never indignant with them at the attitude they had so carefully concealed. On the contrary, he felt touched that they should have been at so much pains not to reveal it. Every patent act of self-denial on Ivy's part, every kindly word from his sons now bulked large in his regard and he told himself that he was mistaken in his vision and had concentrated with gross selfishness upon his own interests to the exclusion of his family's.

For a time this new orientation kept him unusually silent and preoccupied, but only Linda noticed it. Then he appeared to come to himself again and throw off the brooding habit that she had marked. In secret he considered the effect of his new knowledge and found that it had materially altered his values and modified his old enthusiasms. Richard had never for one moment regarded his existence as coming between other people and the enjoyment of theirs ; and this reflection was exceedingly distasteful to him. He argued strongly against it, vowed to himself that it was not right

or reasonable to suppose any such thing, demanded from his wits to know how, in justice, he was robbing his wife and his sons. But presently he began to understand; and then the thought startled him and horrified him so much that he cast it away and told himself that he must trust in Providence more and his own intelligence less. He was often tempted to speak to Linda on the subject, but he denied himself out of affection for her. He could not explain his new-born doubts without telling her whence they sprang, and that he felt to be impossible. She preserved her old attitude to her mother and her brothers, and Richard knew that though she cared not much for them, his confession could only breed pain for her, so he said nothing. His attitude to his sons was, however, changed. To them he listened more patiently and did not so often air his own opinions concerning the right way to tackle life. He was mild and would sometimes lament that their ambitions had been thwarted. They caught a look in his eyes sometimes, but did not understand it; and Ivy was also puzzled with vague allusions and regrets, which were unlike him and which she could not explain.

On an evening visit to the inn, Richard heard certain opinions that surprised him and opened yet another way into the undiscovered country. He was talking of his land and explaining why the small fruits had fallen so far short of expectation.

‘Why the mischief don’t you sell it for what it would fetch and be done with it?’ asked old Sloggett. ‘What’s the use of it to you compared to the spot of money it might bring—little worth though it is?’

Chalice took the question home with him and it made the going heavy. That was a subject he could talk about to Linda, because he did not know how she might reply;

though he shrank from mentioning it to his wife, since he knew what she would say. But then he remembered that Ivy never had said it, though the wish must often have come to her ; and he gave her credit.

Linda often joined him when he pottered about at the lime-kiln and planned future operations ; and it was there, alone with her, that he raised the question.

She protested strongly, however, and reminded her father of an aspect he had not considered.

‘ You can’t sell your land for a very good reason,’ she said. ‘ It was a gift. You can fling a gift back in the giver’s face and no harm done ; but you can’t sell a gift, Father.’

Richard had not risen to such distinction of mind, but he applauded the sentiment.

‘ There ! You’re always right and I wish I’d thought on that at the inn. Of course I couldn’t do it,’ he answered, much pleased. ‘ For that matter, it’s the most cherished possession ever came my way.’

‘ You’ll die a landowner if I’ve got anything to do with it,’ promised Linda, ‘ and though the fruits failed this year, that’s no reason why they shouldn’t make good next.’

‘ If I could better the small fruits I would,’ he said, ‘ but the potatoes are coming on fine and I count for them to set us up again.’

Alone that night doubts none the less crowded down upon him and Linda’s argument looked not so sound. He knew that if he wrote to Simon and asked permission to sell the land, it would be given. There was another thought in his mind also. Great subconscious movements were working there and his modest intellect began to press upon him in a sinister fashion at this time. He was careful to keep these discoveries to himself, but he began to appreciate them.

One who knew what was passing might have marked evidence of the subterranean changes, but none did know and least of all his daughter.

He spoke about the land next day and told her that Mr. Pye would probably agree as to a sale.

‘It’s got in me I ought to make the wrench, Linda,’ he said. ‘Such things must be tackled in a resolute spirit. It means a lot to me, but I brought my common sense to bear upon it lying wakeful last night, and I looked ahead. ’Tis a fault in me that I’m mostly too well satisfied with the present to look in the future. Nought stands still and you used to bring justice to your task.’

‘I told you all there was to tell about that yesterday,’ she answered; but he shook his head.

‘No, not all. Now, save for you, the land’s dearer to me than aught else and you might say the last link that binds me to earth. And that’s bad.’

‘I should think it was, Father! What rubbish are you talking?’ she cried.

‘I’m telling you. And I grant it’s rubbish and must be altered. I’ve always been too addicted to a spot of land. But land’s like all the rest and less than all the rest, because the rest are living creatures and will go on when I’m sped. Scripture says we brought nothing into this earth and can’t carry nothing out of it; but that’s wrong. I brought two sons and a daughter into this earth, and I ain’t remembering the sons and the mother of the sons so well as I ought.’

‘I don’t want to hear any more of that stuff,’ said Linda. ‘And if you’re all for common sense, Father, then ask yourself who’d buy the land if it was for sale. It’s your joy and delight, same as it is mine, and you can leave it in your will if you mind to—leave it to me and I’ll cherish it as long as I live if I live longer than you do.’

His mind wandered off to her suggestion.

'A will now ! That's an idea I never thought upon. The house will go to your mother, of course, though it's crying for money. It don't look like it did, Linda.'

'No need to worry about the house. Samson's going to get on to it later and you're going to help him. Paint's cheap, and Bidlake's going to put in some work on the thatch for friendship. He don't forget how you've served him a score of times and got him good money.'

'A very fine man, Neddy Bidlake,' admitted Richard. 'Time was when he'd have given his soul to wed you, Linda.'

'He got a better than me,' she said.

'No, he didn't, but a very good woman, I grant. I cleave to you about me ; but that's only another side of my selfishness and I must watch out and not let self come between me and your future and the future of my family. So I say I'd like to see you wed to the right one and in your own home, where I'd be welcome. You was born to reign over a home, I'd say. The past is past and gone, and such things be forgot like the storms of last winter. There's a grand wife for somebody waiting in you.'

'Don't you say that, my old dear. I've had enough of men.'

'How do Johnny Caryl look in the eyes of your experience ?' he asked. 'A steadfast man in his bleak fashion.'

'I like his bleakness,' she said. 'It's got an edge to it, same as the east wind ; but it's clean. In the eyes of my experience, as you put it, Father, I see that a dour, solemn chap like Johnny's got his points. He'd make a good husband for some battered woman who wanted harbour and safety ; but not me. I couldn't live with him.'

'He'll never marry nobody else, however.'

'That'll save him from the evil to come and do him a better turn than he knows.'

'He'd have you thankfully yet.'

'So he told me, poor chap, because he explained I was more sinned against than sinning and he wasn't a man to throw stones against a woman in any case. He'd always make me laugh at him, that's something. But you couldn't marry a man because you knew he'd always make you laugh at him.'

'No, no, you couldn't do that,' admitted Dick.

'You can only marry for love if you're made same as me,' said his daughter, '—just stark love. Lots marry for something different. I met a good few interesting women when I was running with that man. Success is the way to win some women and failure is the way to win others. Some like the rich, prosperous, dashing kind that lesser men touch their hats to. I was that sort of fool myself. And some let their hearts go out to the forlorn failures and think how they'll turn 'em into brilliant successes. That's another sort of fool. We can't change men any more than they can change us.'

'Love steals out from all manner of queer places, like a jack hare from his form,' said Richard, 'but only time can show if it was the real thing, or some pixie dressed up like love.'

He was silent for a time thinking on his past, then spoke again under pressure of his new opinions.

'Things happen to throw a light upon life sometimes,' he said, 'and often a chance accident will let in something to surprise you, Linda. I never thought much upon it till lately and, when I did, I couldn't see the facts very clear. But it's borne in upon me that my great love for your mother wasn't quite so grand as I've been pleased to think. I've

took it for granted and I didn't ought. We own-self men be apt to take too much for granted what suits our book. But the bed-rock truth, for your ear alone, is that my love for her wasn't up to standard, else she'd be a happier woman than what she is. And what does that mean in plain English ? The ugly fact that I've failed her.'

'What's come over you ?' cried Linda. 'It ain't wholesome, Father ! It's contrary to your nature and it hurts me. It hurts me cruel. Who are you to run yourself down—a man well thought upon by everybody on God's earth that ever had anything to do with him ? Who did you ever fail—least of all Mother ? You've been a rare good husband to her and a wonder of pluck and patience. You make me mad when you sing small about her ; and if you want to know the naked truth I'll tell you. Mother's failed you—failed you a thousand ways.'

'Don't say it, Linda. Call it home,' he begged, 'and I'll call home what I said as well. Forget it. She's your mother, and that's enough to make me proud of her. We're very good friends and she's had a lot to put up with in her time because of my disposition. You can't have everything in this world, and the lucky ones, like me, always fasten on some fancied ill just to save their faces. Think of the mother I had and think of the daughter I've got. More'n my share of good luck. Yes, and time—plenty of time before me to show your mother she haven't drawn the blank she thinks.'

Linda felt bewildered at this display, for it seemed that she was listening to some other man than her father. She set about to find what had made him think and speak in such an extraordinary fashion, but could imagine no reason for it. She said very little and grew calm, but Richard perceived that he had startled her and felt vexed with himself. He brought everything to Linda as a matter of course, yet now

swiftly realised that here was ground he must travel alone. Where it was going to take him he could not feel sure, but the journey would have no companion.

So Challice determined that nothing must ever be said again to waken dislike for her family in Linda, and though her attitude had comforted him in one way, it created anxiety in another. He grew much more guarded in future and always spoke hopefully to her of his wife and sons. He strove harder to think well of them also, and it was this tremendous impulse—to look at his life only as it must appear to others—that led to future decisions. In a strong mind these had been repelled on their first appearance, but Dick's intelligence was never great and it had suffered beyond repair after his downfall.

'I won't cry no more stinking fish to anybody,' he told himself. 'I'll put 'em first, where they rightly belong, and make Linda do the same.'

From this standpoint emerged sensational truths for the master of Church Cottage. Very slowly he discovered them, but when he had done so and convinced himself of their significance, his outlook upon his own life became changed. His sons and his wife regarded him as a cross, to be borne with courage indeed, but still a cross; and the more he reflected upon himself in the light of a cross for other people—the more he accustomed himself to this idea—the more prone was he to accept the truth of it. At first such a picture cast him down and shattered his peace, but in time, as his mind became occupied with the future, he found other matter with which to busy himself. 'Granted I'm a cross to them that did ought to look upon me as a crown,' thought Richard, 'then the next question arises how their cross can be taken off them and I can carry on different, so as to make 'em feel the cross has gone.' He felt sure at first

that, now he knew where the shoe pinched them, he would find a way to banish their discomfort and put all right again. He thought upon them one by one and considered how to bring more contentment into their lives. With confidence and good spirits he approached this task, and Linda was glad to find him cheerful again and no return of the morbid strain which she had begun to detest.

He often wished that his mother were alive to help him and clear his thinking. Indeed, he said as much to Linda more than once.

'She'd cut to the root of a subject and lay it bare under your eyes,' he said. 'She believed in a lot you younger generation know was nonsense; but against that I'd say you believe in a lot of new wisdom she knew was nonsense.'

He would grow testy sometimes, but when he broke out it was to Ivy, not his children. In anger he spoke on a day when they were alone and she seemed more resigned than usual.

'You bear with me and you bear with me, while you knit sighs into every stitch your needle takes,' he said. 'Can't you see it's hell for a strong man to be borne with, as if he was an ill beyond cure? I don't want to be borne with. I want to stand on my one leg as the master and supporter and head of the house. I ain't got in my second childhood to my knowledge, Ivy, and though you've learned me to do without a wife, that was for your own pleasure and not mine. If I'm acting anything to vex you and my sons, or standing in your light, or making life harder for you than can be helped, speak up and tell me; but for God's life don't sit like a saint waiting for the murderers to come and martyr you.'

Ivy was fluttered at these outbreaks, because they were something new and the reason for them she could not guess.

They lasted but a short time and Richard always expressed deep contrition after them and begged her forgiveness. She never answered him, but only stared out of her beautiful, wistful eyes and went on with whatever she might be doing. She told Miss Mingo about them, but not her children.

‘Sometimes I think the poor man will go off his head and have to be took away,’ mourned Ivy more than once. ‘I just trust my religion, Susan, but I’ve got to a pass now when I never know what a day may bring forth.’

Richard began to dream dreams at this season and they would wake him. His thoughts pursued him into sleep and suffered a magic change. Nothing hideous or painful emerged from the dream scenery and he strove to describe it to Linda.

‘I don’t slumber so sound as I used to do,’ he said. ‘I get a lot of visions, and you could almost fancy they were sent by the dead. And the dead will often come themselves—as large as life, Linda. Yes, they will—the most unlikely folk, that I’ve not thought upon for years. I don’t see their faces very clear. You never see faces very clear in dreams ; but you know who it is. They’ll steal about you, like ghosts in a manner of speaking, and bring their light with ’em into your darkness. Granny comes now and again, as if she wanted to keep in touch with me, and—a queer thing—folk I’ve little liked in life steal to me. I know ’em, but I don’t feel any dislike to ’em now. There’s a change come over ’em. You don’t often quarrel with dream folk and they don’t often quarrel with you.’

As time passed her father would occupy himself with very unusual subjects and bring both fear and wonder to Linda. From the old, resolute habit—to look at existence as stretching steadfastly before him—he would often skip his balance of life altogether and ruminate as to what might lie beyond

it. His mother's death, she thought, must have turned him in this unfamiliar direction, but he veered more and more towards it and made her impatient.

'You're tuned to talk as if you was an old man, Father,' she said one day, 'instead of one in your prime still. Anybody would think you weren't minded to live much longer and it hurts me cruel to hear you.'

'Don't let it,' he answered. 'I was always one to look far ahead. What they call "long-sighted," Linda. Nought to do with your natural age. In youth you can't look beyond the rim of life, but when you get forward, you get in sight of what lies beyond.'

But she judged there must be reasons hidden from her knowledge and strove to interest him in the immediate future.

He would say odd things sometimes and often quoted Simon Pye, though not always to agree with him.

'He was a man that on his downcast days would tell more than he'd stick to,' explained Richard. 'Mr. Pye seldom took such a hopeful view of life as what I used to do, but then, of course, he saw far deeper into it than ever I did. He'd had his buffets and his torments, and they shook his faith. In one of his cast-down days he said that the churches were only God Almighty's graves, scattered over the face of the land, to crumble into dust like any other graves when God was forgot. But I withstood him there. "There's life in the old God yet, Master," I said to the man, and he laughed. He didn't often laugh, I grant you, but he laughed when I said that.'

'He was a good man,' declared Linda.

'Never knew a better : a rock of goodness and great on righteous dealing. I loved the man. But you can't have righteousness without the God of righteousness. I hold to

that, Linda, for all my frosty luck. Something tells me, as I look on into the nether darkness, that the Lord will make His face to shine upon me and give me His peace yet.'

'I'm sure He will, Father. You was built for peace,' she answered, 'and your nature would always home with peace.'

The odd attitude peeped out unconsciously while Challice was still in those dark channels where now flowed his thinking. Linda lacked religion, but went to church on Sunday sometimes, to please her mother, and on returning one night with Ivy, she related to Richard what they had heard.

'The preacher was a stranger,' she said, 'and he told us he was preaching for the heathen to the heathen; and that made a few of the people sit up. He talked pretty straight and didn't say anything very comforting for the godly ones; but he explained that we ought to be shamed of being heathens along of our good chances, while the savage folk he wanted money for had never had any chances at all. And if we called ourselves Christians we ought to behave as such, and help the heathen to know better. He was all for the missionaries and vowed they were doing blessed work and we ought to take a lesson from them and do our bit to help them the only way we can.'

Dick nodded.

'Certainly, certainly,' he said. ''Tis a thought we ought to mind, and I have minded it for that matter. Christ's missionaries may be killed and eaten after as we know. But what of it? What of it? Wasn't Christ Himself slain by heathen folk, and don't Christian people eat His flesh and drink His blood on feast days for evermore? All very orderly and good sense as I see it, my dear.'

He saw still more when he was alone that night and his wandering mind found something tangible to cling to.

Looking back afterwards, Richard would often assure himself that the chance subject of the missionaries had led him upon sure ground at last. 'It have got scripture to support it,' he argued in the darkness of night, 'for who more right with God than him that gives up his life for his friends? And who wins higher praise? And if the Saviour of the world could do it for all, where's the honest man would shrink from doing it for his own?'

A sort of peace rested on Richard when he considered where his mind had now brought him. It seemed that having attained this summit by arduous sweat of brain, he could sleep and pursue his journey refreshed with another dawn. He felt slumber pleasantly creeping over him. 'Tis a very great thought to rely upon,' he told himself, 'and I'll see how it looks by the light of day.'

XXII.

DECISION.

The irony of chance operated to lift both Richard and his family into cheerfulness at this moment and there came a letter from Simon Pye with a handsome present in it. The giver continued as he had always been, in ignorance of his friend's straitened circumstances, but he knew that his gift would be accepted in the spirit that inspired it. He wrote cheerfully for him, announced that, though unprepared to come and see them, he was himself the better for his new life and the conditions of his new home. He had found a medical man in whom he felt utmost confidence and was now able to regard his own future with more hope. 'There appears no physical reason why I should not find life worth living for some years,' he told them, 'and that is the best

you can desire for yourself, or anyone else.' He directed Linda to send him certain books, which he had left at 'Prospect Place,' and he sent Richard a cheque for five-and-twenty pounds. 'Devote this to your pleasure, Dick,' he said. 'Take your family to the sea and enjoy a change of air if you are so disposed.'

Her father was no penman and Linda wrote his letter for him. She answered Simon, despatched his books, recorded Richard's gratitude for such a generous gift and their united pleasure to know that he grew stronger. She told of his orchard and his house and promised him some of his apples when they were ripe in October. But she did not say that the money would pay the most pressing calls upon her father's pocket.

Challice derived varied emotions from the present, and the most bitter, yet the most apt to chime with his secret thoughts, was the reflection that a gift designed for his family's pleasure and the rare delight of a holiday, should be put to no such purpose. Thus indirectly, after the passage of a few days, Simon's beneficence only served to fortify Richard in a direction that Mr. Pye would have been the last to applaud. For the wheelwright reflected that, but for him and his obligations to others, the money might have been spent as his old friend suggested. He saw his wife and children enjoying themselves and resting beside the sea as happily as thousands of other people. Dick's mind did not work very logically, and now his bent was ever to see himself as the stubborn obstacle between his own and their contentment. The measure of their past well-being, for which his life of labour was responsible, seldom occurred to Richard. Instead he now interested himself with reflections as to how they would stand without him. He took it for granted that he was the incubus—an old-man-

of-the-sea on their weary shoulders. Then he calculated his value to them if he were removed. Ever sanguine, a sort of negative cheerfulness resulted from this survey, for he felt confident that if 'Church Cottage' were sold along with the smithy and his land, a very considerable sum must be the immediate result. He set a financial market value on these possessions and felt very little doubt that it would enable his wife and children to seek another land, such as they desired, and find renewed happiness and prosperity within it. 'No question but there's more to foreign parts than I know,' thought Richard, 'and life might run more agreeable for 'em.' He would listen to Leonard and Samson on the subject and ceased to be impatient with them.

Thus, little by little, the true meaning of his challenge dawned for Dick; but it was one upon which no other opinion could be invited. The very thought made him cautious and put a bridle on his tongue, for it involved a new and strange measure of secrecy that was strange to him and, at first, difficult. Inevitable and obvious changes resulted, for he chattered less openly and fell into a measure of fitful brooding which his family was quick to observe. Linda mourned it and puzzled over it; Ivy held it a good omen rather than not.

'He's gone a lot more silent of late,' she said, when drinking a cup of tea with Susan Mingo one Sunday. 'He was always a rare one to chatter, like his mother, my dear Richard was, and has an art to keep on all about nothing till your head aches. But boys will be boys as they say, and I always felt he'd never grown up. Now it looks to be as if he began to see life can't go on just by talking about it; and if he gets a better understanding of his position, he might see if he could do anything.'

She told Susan about Simon Pye's generosity and arrived at the same conclusion as Dick had already done.

'Needless to say there won't be no sea air for anybody,' she said, 'though a godsend if it could have fallen out; but if we had been free of debt, what a blessing it might have been for all of us!'

'The money was a blessing for a good few others instead,' explained Susan, 'and no doubt a blessing for Richard according, with his big heart. But not for you, of course.'

'I was well pleased he did what he did,' answered Ivy. 'His family never come first in poor Dick's mind for some strange reason.'

'Charity did ought to begin at home, no doubt,' admitted Susan. 'But if the good man comes to a composition with his creditors, Ivy, you might find a pinch over to take a week by the sea yet.'

'No, nothing like that,' explained Mrs. Challice. 'A bankrupt man is watched very close after. They can't play about—quite right too. But what I say is that there's no disgrace, and even if they hard people take it hard, still the law's on your side and you get peace from knowing it, though plenty is a thing of the past.'

Ivy's husband, however, offered no immediate evidence that he was taking the course she advocated. Summer came and he declared that his business mended.

'Folk are willing to let me work off debts by services,' he said. 'It don't amount to much and lessens the return at the smithy, but it's something and John Caryl's patient and good to me. I tell him he shan't be kept out of his full money again much longer, and meantime he don't bawlk at a bit less.'

'Things will come to a climax before so very long, how-

ever,' feared Ivy, 'and 'tis always better to outwit a climax if you can, Dick.'

He laughed at that and said what was safe to say, since she could not guess at his meaning.

'You're right as usual, Ivy. Things will come to a climax presently, I shouldn't wonder ; but then, again, I may outwit it, as you say.'

He was very serious with himself now as the future opened before him, and he warned himself to take no unlawful step. 'I won't go a hand's breadth off the path of Jesus Christ,' he determined. 'There might be danger to the right and left, but so long as I keep on His tracks in my own faulty fashion, I'm safe hereafter and can't come to no harm here. But you want the wisdom of the serpent when you're dealing with your fellow-creatures because of your motives, which they be apt to misread. You can keep the harmlessness of the dove for God, Who sees all.'

Suicide was in his mind now and firmly seated there. It tinged his reflections and he worked curiously to banish the hereditary attitude implicit in his conscience and take the new-born view of his conviction. 'Tis condemned because church folk don't see straight about it, though they've got their Lord's example staring 'em in the face,' Richard would remember. 'He took up His cross with His eyes open to save the world from hell, then why for shouldn't I follow His road to the death to save my little world ?'

Trivial thoughts intruded out of his inevitable estimates of what had once been so good to him.

'I'll die a land-owner—that's something,' he promised himself, 'and I'll go to death dumb. I've talked a damned sight too much all my silly life. There's the need to be careful now and nobody shall ever hear me squeak about dying again, nor yet as to the joys of being alive.'

He had not reached to any reflection concerning details as yet, but he was determined of one vital thing : the manner of his passing must be a secret between himself and his Maker. ' Nobody else is going to understand,' he thought, ' and it would cast a slur on the family.' Thus his mind was not as dead to reality as his wife imagined ; but Richard intended to trust the coming reality only where he believed that it would be understood, while concealing it from his fellow-creatures. Now he practised to present a more cheerful front again and, indeed, this needed no great simulation, for, once he had determined his action, a sort of weight lifted off his mind for a time. No instant demand confronted him and there was much to think about. His thoughts depressed him sometimes, while at other times they heartened him. Linda became a sort of repository for much that he began to desire should happen when he was gone. He only dwelt casually upon these things, so that she should attach no special importance to them when the days came to do so. ' Death throws a great light on your past for them that loved you,' he assured himself, ' and rounds the edges a bit for them that didn't.'

At first he feared the necessity for a sudden end and shrank from it, but fear left him under the stress of details and gradually he accepted the fixed idea as a part of life which did not even interfere with his sleep. The ordeal lay yet a long way off, and he was glad and counted the events that must still demand his attention and intervene. ' Come I've got his little hamper of apples packed and despatched for Mr. Pye—that's time to be away ; but they're far short of ripeness yet awhile,' he would remind himself, ' and there's a lot else besides them.'

Meantime his purpose crept nearer, though the sting and terror were gone out of it. ' Once I can see I'm best in tune

with my own little corner by going out of it, that's the righteous deed,' he would reflect, 'and once righteous, always righteous.'

His determination bore fruit of strange flavour for him and a vague aura of new thoughts, that hovered about his wits, but evaded any definition because he lacked the power to put them into words. They flashed fitfully, like sheet lightning, and left his mind very dark sometimes when they were gone. The 'Will to Life,' that was his birthright and had always been intense, battled now with the new impulse to end life; but he escaped regret by obliterating his own point of view and cleaving upon the viewpoint of his family. There were other coigns of vantage also, but his wife and children alone mattered: he saw with their eyes, and there was nothing to baffle him then, for the vision of his home, so clouded with him in the centre of it, grew instantly bright and clear when he was gone.

He told himself that he could see the gloom lift from them and hear a new note of cheer in their voices, when the shock of his sudden departure was forgotten before the promise of better times. No blame would ever attach to them and no remorse taint their future happiness. They had not decreed his dismissal, and though words, overheard by chance, were the seed from which his self-destruction would spring, no sort of blame could touch the speakers. Indeed, Richard now chose to believe that the truth had been brought to his ear by an act of Providence.

For the rest, his 'feel' of the world was now that he ought to be getting out of it quickly. In his muddled way he asked himself what had always made him love it so well; what had made him cling to life, survive his injuries and amaze those who ministered to him. He remembered how the doctors and nurses declared that only his will power

had to be thanked for life, and that their ministry was powerless without his own tremendous purpose. But when he came to take his existence to pieces and seek what it held that made him cling so stoutly to living, Richard could find nothing big enough to furnish a reason. He decided that his mother and his daughter were at the bottom of his survival. Nought else looked sufficiently great to account for it. He had told them at the 'Cat and Fiddle' that, while there were good liquor and good tobacco and good companions, life was worth while; but such thoughts looked cheap. Even the dream of another spring and the smell of April rain upon his own land were trivial reasons for wanting to be alive when compared with those that now made him desire to be dead.

At lighter moments all manner of little interests awakened when he pictured his family without him. He liked to follow them in thought and wonder what they would do and how each would act in the hour of liberation. If there should be money enough, he guessed that his wife and sons would emigrate, and Linda might well go with them into a new world and its possibilities. Ivy was good to look upon and would probably wed again; Linda—lovelier than ever her mother had been—would surely be rewarded with a good husband some day.

Richard told himself when autumn came that he had remembered everything and there was no step remaining to be taken but the last. Regrets and sorrows were all fallen off him but one: he hated leaving his daughter and knew that his sudden death must bring her deep grief; but he feared less for her future than for his sons, because he knew that she possessed character, great fortitude and the power to make a strong shield of her experience. And then the nights grew longer, and when the thrushes sang their last

autumnal songs, Richard felt that they were warning him to be away. He had thought to go with the swallows once, but put it off. 'It shall come on a day in November,' he determined.

(To be continued.)

A BIRTHDAY ODE.

*Say not farewell to what is gone,
To days that will not stay.
Remember that the years pass on,
But never pass away.*

*You taught me beauty to possess,
And wonder to attain ;
Opened my eyes to holiness,
And wrung my heart with pain.*

*You saw no greater truth than love,
Gave all, that you might take
A heart ; and then its worth to prove,
You stabbed that heart awake.*

*The love you gave will always bless ;
And though our ways divide,
Whene'er I look on loveliness
I feel you by my side.*

*The glory of a radiant dawn
Fades into brighter day.
So let the changing years go on ;
I would not have them stay.*

AIMÉE CADELL.

CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

BY GEORGE G. LOANE.

KEATS's fine sonnet has made sure that the name at least of Chapman's Homer is familiar to every person of culture—the name at least, and probably also at most. Chapman's version soon became demoded. Less than fifty years after its completion Ogilby found that there was room for another and more modern verse rendering, and then came Pope. If Chapman was difficult reading for men of the Restoration, it does not follow that he is more difficult for us. He has been produced in modern guise by three editors, and the 'unconquerable quaintness' which Lamb ascribed to him can be tasted without the drawback of a chaotic punctuation and obsolete spelling. Why then is he not generally read? He took immense pains. His attitude to his subject was religious, his status as a poet indubitable. He wrote the *Iliad* in the swinging fourteeners which give something of the swift magnificence of the Greek hexameter, and the *Odyssey* in free heroic couplets untrammelled by the periodical pauses of Pope's epigrammatic style. If his Greek was but small and his Latin unscholarly, that was no bar to making a fine poem, however inaccurate a translation it might be. He used mainly the word for word Latin version—writing an occasional note to prove his use of the Greek—and where he did not understand it had no scruple in filling out the sense out of his own head. Yet he remains a decidedly difficult author. It is not only the number of his obsolete words. The geese of Penelope's dream may 'eat their yoted wheat' without serious offence. More annoy-

ing are the words which have altered in meaning. 'Display' means 'discern'; 'aspire' means 'reach'—and many more. The tortured syntax too is at times intolerable. For if the truth be told, few famous works of poetry are so unequal as this Homer. Charles Lamb, after admitting that some parts are more highly finished than others, writes of 'the earnestness and passion which he has put into every part of these poems.' With all respect, in many places the earnestness is far more conspicuous than the passion. The 'inextinguishable fire' which Swinburne found pervading it sometimes flickers low and the ashes are gritty in the mouth. What is more, Chapman knew it; and he said so, being the most honest and high-minded of authors:

'Thus, with labour enough, though with more comfort in the merits of my divine Author, I have brought my translation of his Iliads to an end. If, either therein, or in the harsh utterance or matter of my Comment before, I have, for haste, scattered¹ with my burthen (less than fifteen weeks being the whole time that the last twelve Books' translation stood me in) I desire my present will (and I doubt not hability, if God give life, to reform and perfect all hereafter) may be ingenuously accepted for the absolute work.'

The early death of Prince Henry was a calamity for England generally and for Chapman in particular. He found no other patron to make possible the revised edition here foreshadowed.

But it is time to let the Homer speak for itself. The similes always shine; here is a short one from the eighteenth Iliad:

¹ Privately, I believe he meant 'stackered,' an alternative for 'staggered,' and that the corruption came from the same sort of Spoonerism which gave 'cattle' for 'tackle' in the Odyssey.

*'Down jumpt he from his chariot ; down leapt his foe as light,
And as on some far-looking rock a cast of vultures fight,
Fly on each other, strike and truss, part, meet, and then stick by,
Tug both with crooked beaks and seres, cry, fight, and fight and
cry ;*

So fiercely fought these angry kings, and shew'd as bitter galls.'

Here the third line is Chapman's own, and a fine addition ; the fourth is a free poetic version of three Greek words—curve-clawed, hook-beaked, and screaming ; the last five words are quite bearable padding ; and the whole number of lines is the same as Homer's.

Take a longer piece of what seems to me extremely fine writing. Venus, wounded by Diomed, has fled for cure and consolation to her mother Dione, whose consolation ends as follows :

'But by Minerva's will

*Thy wound the foolish Diomed was so profane to give,
Not knowing he that fights with Heaven hath never long to live,
And for this deed he never shall have child about his knee,
To call him father, coming home. Besides, hear this from me,
Strength-trusting man, though thou be strong, and art in strength
a tower,*

*Take heed a stronger meet thee not, and that a woman's power
Contains not that superior strength, and lest that woman be
Adrastus' daughter and thy wife, the wise Aegiale,
When, from this hour not far, she wakes, even sighing with desire
To kindle our revenge on thee with her enamouring fire,
In choosing her some fresh young friend, and so drown all thy fame
Won here in war, in her court peace, and in an opener shame.'*

As a translation this is definitely bad, for Chapman has freely altered Homer to work in the post-Homeric legend of Aegiale's adultery, but is not the rhetoric masterly :

The fourteeners were not universally approved ; 'Squint-eyed Envy' looked askance at them ; but in lines prefatory

to the complete Iliad of 1611 Chapman maintained that they had made good, 'For this long poem asks this length of verse.' However, he deserted them in writing the Odyssey, falling back on the usual measure of his original poems. Why he did so I cannot tell. The heroics seem to me to have far less impetus than the long verse; they convey less of Swinburne's 'exaltation,' and are disfigured throughout, but especially towards the end, by turgid periphrases. However, Charles Lamb is against me, so I must be wrong: 'I shall die in the belief that he improved upon Homer . . . in the Odyssey in particular.' Praising the heroics of the Hymn to Pan, he calls them 'Milton's blank verse without the rhyme,' and indeed they are generally pleasant reading as the following extract will suggest. Ulysses is asleep in the Phaeacian ship, being mysteriously wafted home to Ithaca:

*'And as amidst a fair field four brave horse
Before a chariot, stung into their course
With fervent lashes of the smarting scourge,
That all their fire blows high, and makes them urge
To utmost speed the measure of their ground:
So bore the ship aloft her fiery bound;
About whom rushed the billows black and vast
In which the sea-roars burst. As firm as fast
She plied her course yet; nor her wingèd speed
The falcon gentle could for pace exceed;
So cut she through the waves, and bore a man
Even with the Gods in counsels; that began
And spent his former life in all misease;
Battles of men, and rude waves of the seas;
Yet now securely slept, forgetting all.'*

But I miss the thrill of Homer's lines.

Let us take a rapid glance through the Iliad. The earlier books had the advantage of careful correction from the original version of 1598. Even the dull Catalogue of Ships

Chapman takes 'as a young horse goes through a spring meadow—ramping':

*'The dwellers of Caliarus, of Bessa, Opoën,
The youth of Cynus, Skarphis, and Augias, lovely men,
Of Tarpheis, and of Thronius, near flood Boagrius' fall,
Twice twenty martial barks of these, less Ajax sail'd withal.'*

The names sound like an incantation. If the famous parting of Hector and Andromache misses much of its due pathos, it is not because Chapman was incapable of the pathetic. To Briseis' lament over Patroclus dead, in a later book, he has added a touch of real beauty: 'Thou being ever kind, Ever delightsome, one sweet grace fed still with one sweet mind.' Here the first four words only are Homer. I prefer to think that Chapman was tired when he wrote the farewell. The speeches are puffed out with inflated additions, and there are weak periphrases like 'thus will they nourish thy extremes,' for 'some one will say.' But the interview over, he is himself again: 'Where every fear turned back her look, and every look shed tears'; and so on to the fine simile of Paris coming forth in arms like a spirited horse broke loose. In Diomedes' curt refusal of the Trojan terms he has equalled if not surpassed Homer:

*'Let no man take the wealth, or dame; for now a child's weak eye
May see the eminent black end of Priam's empery.'*

The magnificent speeches of the Embassy lose little in Chapman's English, and the exciting night raid of the Doloneia is carried through triumphantly. Yet at the very end the words of Nestor, 'for Zeus the cloud-gatherer and his grey-eyed daughter Athene love you both,' are blown out to this:

*'For he that shadows heaven with clouds loves both as his delights,
And she that supple earth with blood cannot forbear your sighs.'*

The great moment when unarmed Achilles mounts the rampart, and turns back the tide of Trojan victory by his thrice-repeated cry, is marred by Chapman's insistence on a dubious epithet, and he must needs weaken the words 'he shouted amain' to 'Achilles spake,' for the sake of a rhyme. But it is not till the nineteenth book that a general failure in style occurs, and as a symptom a breakdown in metre. So far he has almost always observed the division of the line after the eighth syllable, but in this book he disregards it more than a dozen times. Jove's words 'The men sprung from my blood' become 'that more than manly race whose honour'd veins enfold my eminent blood.' And just after Briseis' beautiful words quoted above, Achilles addresses the dead body of his friend in this thrilling sentence: 'Thou, when this speed was hurried against the Trojans, evermore apposedst in my tent a pleasing breakfast.' The new arms of Vulcan's making are tested to see 'if his motion could with ease abide their brave instruction,' for 'if his limbs could run freely.' It annoys me, perhaps unreasonably, to be told that Neptune 'did his state invest,' where he merely sat. 'If report perform not the repair of all this to him' is an unworthy way of saying, as Homer does, 'if he does not learn.' But the Theomachy starts off with great vigour, and later the avenging Achilles is finely given: 'he was none of these remorseful men, gentle and affable, but fierce at all times, and mad then.' The summons and the coming of the Winds to rouse the funeral pyre are good, and their departure magnificent: 'the Thracian billow rings their high retreat, ruffled with cuffs of their triumphant wings.' But on the whole these last books are certainly below standard.

The Homer has many smaller points of interest on which much might be said. There are Chapman's additions, most

of them metrical ekes, but some explanatory, based perhaps on a note in Spondanus, and some are shameless insertions of his own views on some matter that particularly interested him. Again, readers of Chapman know how often he recurs to some pet notion or figure, such as shipwreck in port, the power of example, the lightning before death, or the relation of power and will. These and others are imported into Homer, the last at least fifteen times. 'Go thou home,' says Ulysses to Telemachus, 'and troop up with the wooers, Thy will with theirs joined, power with their rude powers,' where the second line is pure Chapman. There are also the omissions, many no doubt accidental, but the deliberate whitewashing of Agamemnon is very noticeable. His victorious duels are never allowed to include the spoiling of the slain. Chapman tends to idealise all the heroes except Menelaus, whom in the notes he pursues with rancour, and the tendency extends backwards to the third generation; for Autolycus being Ulysses' grandfather must not be a liar or a house-breaker. The longest omission is the highly technical account of the harnessing of Priam's mule cart. Chapman shirked what Pope's virtuosity sailed through with ease; and with unexpected craftiness he also omits later references to the mules, leaving us to suppose that Hector's body was brought home on the chariot with Priam. Another matter of interest, but not for a general article like this, is the number of misprints, over a hundred of which remain uncorrected in any edition.

One example I will give. Penelope, charmed by the discourse of Ulysses disguised as a needy old wanderer, bids her maids tuck him up comfortably for the night, and in the morning 'bathe and give alms'—to rouse a good appetite for his breakfast. No editor has been offended by those alms, to the point of consulting the Greek. There he would

find 'bathe and anoint,' and elsewhere Chapman joins baths and balms, i.e. fragrant oils for the skin, the true reading here. The maids are no more likely to have given a tip to the wanderer, than to have expected one from him.

In conclusion, here are two criticisms which I will not characterize. In 1687 Winstanley wrote of Chapman :

' One in his time much praised for the fluency of his muse, gaining a great repute for his translation of Homer and Hesiod, which in those times passed as works beyond compare ; and indeed considering he was one of the first who brake the ice in the translation of such learned authors, reading the highest conception of their raptures into a neat polite English, as gave the true meaning of what they intended, and rendered it in a style acceptable to the reader : considering, I say, what age he lived in, it was very well worthy praise, though since the translation of Homer is very far outdone by Mr. Ogilby.'

And in 1935 Sir Stanley Leathes described the Homer as ' for the most part very commonplace doggerel.'

THE CASK.

BY LT.-COM. E. H. CREBBIN.

WE were very young, and very proud of our responsibilities ; for we were all First Lieutenants of Sloops.

So young were we that only six months previously—after some slight lapse in seamanship—I remembered standing to attention and listening to an old salt-horse lieutenant-commander as he referred scathingly to ‘ young officers whose juniority amounted almost to a disease.’

And then, at a bound, we had been thrust forth from the crowded humanity of the gunroom into the solitary, far-flung activities of sloops, destroyers, and small ships innumerable.

Hard-worked we were, perhaps, in those days in the Mediterranean. Twenty-five days at sea in the month was nothing unusual. But when one is twenty years old, and carrying the magical stripe and curl of a Sub-lieutenant R.N., and, at the same time, is invested with the office and responsibilities of a second-in-command of a Sloop, well, life cannot offer too much work.

Secretly, we each thought that no ship in the whole history of the Navy had ever been quite the equal of the little craft of which miraculously we found ourselves executive officer.

Occasionally, we first-lieutenants used to forgather ashore, and with incredible solemnity and ‘ knowingness ’ discuss weighty service matters—including the baffling actions and incomprehensible outlooks of Captains, in general. Invariably, however, when it came to particularities, it was found,

strangely enough, that each one of us was blessed with the possession of a Captain who far transcended, both in character and ability, the usual run of lieutenant-commanders.

Eccentricity—and there seemed to be a good deal of it about just then—was welcomed, as adding to the variety and spice of life. Nevertheless, I remember well, each one of us had, according to his own reckoning, an ‘owner’ superlative in the arts of seamanship and command.

But of all the five Captains, gradually, unassailably, there came a gripping conviction to, not only myself, but to all our group, that my own Captain stood in a class by himself—in the matter of bright ideas and versatility. No other skipper of the five, for instance, had thought, in the middle of a boring trip, when fresh meat was exhausted, of transshipping bodily half a dozen live sheep from our convoy while still under way about 150 miles east of Alboran Island. Nor of catching turtles—also when under way: nor even of entering the Grand Harbour at Malta, at full speed—thereby scotching the *dysah* nuisance: those small, local rowing-craft that buzzed round, ordinarily, like exasperating gnats, as soon as one put a nose through the entrance. And some of the reflected glory came my way. Respectfully, I would be asked what was the latest ‘wheeze’—and frequently, let it be whispered very softly, tentative enquiries would be addressed relating to the astonishing facility with which we seemed to be able to relieve the dockyard of paint—in incredible quantities.

But when the versatile ideas miscarried, alas! it were well then, I remember reflecting ruefully, to have a less brilliant skipper. Such an occasion was the one when, during a spell of boiler-cleaning, we gave a grand reception on board, and owing to various exigencies, had had time to paint only one side of the hull, which side we carefully presented towards

Admiralty House, by judicious manœuvring at our buoy. But, alas for our versatility on that occasion, the Admiral—one of the honoured guests—circled the ship in his barge, with lamentable tactlessness, and lo ! there was unfurled to his twinkling gaze a terrible vista of red lead and naked plating !

Life was lively aboard our ship, and manfully, with the loyal and shrewd assistance of my old Chief Boatswain's Mate, a fine old Irishman called Michael O'Halloran, we strove together to cope with the sudden and brilliant ideas that flowed from the restless brain of our Captain with a fertility that an advertising copywriter would have envied. Gradually, we grew equal to the nerve-racking contest.

Thus, one day, a lovely forenoon in summer, when the hot sun was reflected from spotless paint and glittering brightwork, and the white-planked, holystoned deck stretched fair under one's feet, I was not surprised to receive a message from the Captain inviting my presence.

Arriving, I saluted and awaited my orders.

'Number One,' said the Captain, 'we have executed a master-stroke.' His eyes shone with pride. 'With the aid of a little inside information, I managed last night to secure one of the last barrels of beer in the place.'

He reflected for a moment.

'It is no ordinary little gunroom cask, this ; it is a whacking great barrel that we can display on board this ship with justifiable pride. But we've got to get a move on, for Jenkins of the ——,' and he mentioned one of the other sloops—'is a dirty dog, between you and I and the gatepost, and he has already cast an envious eye upon our property lying up there, undefended, at the Club . . .'

My heart sank within me.

'At the Club, sir !' I exclaimed with misgiving, visualising

the tiers and serried ranks of terraces and breakneck steps that connected that centre of felicity with the main street.

‘Yes, Number One, at the Club,’ confirmed my skipper, with haughty precision. ‘You will please detail a working-party at once, and, as the matter will require seamanship and resource to bring it to a successful conclusion, I suggest that you accompany the working-party and see they don’t pile up the barrel on a wandering Admiral in the main street—it’s full of them—or roll it into Government House by mistake, and then forget what they were sent ashore for.’

My Captain grinned suddenly, and, looking at the thermometer on the bulkhead, rang the bell for his steward.

‘It’s a hot forenoon, Number One,’ he said cheerfully, ‘and for you,’ he added significantly, ‘it’ll be hotter still if anything happens to scupper that barrel. Therefore, you had better have a gin and bitters with me before you start, for I have no doubt you will have your hands full: there are about one hundred and ninety-eight steps down from the Club, and I reckon that cask weighs the best part of four hundred pounds.’

I groaned inwardly as I took the glass on the tray.

‘A thirty-six-gallon one, sir?’ I muttered.

‘Just so, Number One, and the very finest beer.’

‘It won’t do it much good, this passage—this precarious passage—down from the Club, sir,’ I suggested.

But the Captain was not anxious. He put down his glass and looked at his watch.

‘You’ll just have time to do the job before the dinner-hour. I never like my ship’s company to have their dinner-hour interfered with, as you know. All right, Number One, carry on. Remember it will be a triumph if we get this barrel on board in good condition.’

'It will, sir,' I confirmed fervently, still haunted by the vision of a long, long vista of stone steps.

I went aft thoughtfully, and sent for Michael O'Halloran, the Chief Boatswain's Mate.

Soon, he clumped towards me.

'Sorr?' he said, saluting, 'ye sent for me?'

'Yes,' I replied: then, briefly, I explained the position. I noticed that a gleam came to the old man's eye.

'Is it beer, sorr? Faith!' he declared, 'it will be after reminding me of the time we mishandled casks over the river in the Boer War. 'Tis not many we lost, sorr,' he added proudly. 'Three or four—and the right foot of Patsy Donoghue that a crocodile took. He had feet as big as an elephant, had Patsy, and we said to him: "Sure, it's even now ye have one foot as big as any cratur's two feet, let the crocodile go in pace: it's mistakin' your right foot for a young calf it was."'

'All right, Chief Petty Officer O'Halloran,' I said. 'Detail a working-party: one leading-hand and three of the strongest and best seamen we've got. Cox, Brown, and Trelawny would do,' I added, mentioning three men by name. 'You'll go yourself in charge of the party and I will come, too, to keep an eye on things. This is the Captain's property, so everything must be done carefully: no room for errors. I'll have the working-party piped to fall in for inspection in five minutes' time: we'll go in the motor-boat. Bring the necessary tackle along with you.'

'Aye, aye, sir.' The Chief Boatswain's Mate saluted and departed forward, the gleam still in his eye, which was cocked thoughtfully upwards at the white building perched half-way up the face of the steep hillside. Almost, I could read his thoughts as he enumerated the various tackles and

strops and odd lengths of rope that he considered would be necessary to discipline a cask down those precarious steps.

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A seaman, strangely enough, does not, in the ordinary way, seem to care very greatly for a special job which takes him ashore in the forenoon. He appears to be happier doing his ordinary routine work aboard with his cronies and 'raggies' around him.

Thus it was a grave and solemn-faced little group of men which I duly met at the Club, a quarter of an hour later. I noted with approval that they were very spruce and neat, notwithstanding their working-rig. Trust Michael O'Halloran for that. 'A good seaman's always got time to keep clean,' was one of my Chief Boatswain's Mate's favourite aphorisms.

I sought out the Secretary, who smiled reflectively when I explained my mission.

'I'm afraid you're going to have an awful job,' he commented. 'No davits, nor derricks, nor handy eyebolts round these parts. I'll come out and watch you. If you knew what a time we have getting a barrel up here . . .'

'Oh !' I replied easily, as we walked out on to the terrace, 'it's not so difficult. We'll parbuckle the old barrel gently down the first flight, then repeat the process when we've got it round the corner. "Parbuckle,"' I explained, in answer to my companion's query, 'is very simple : you just middle the rope, make the bight fast up above somewhere, over a post or something like it, then pass the two ends under the cask and bring them back again over it : paying out the two ends, you just ease the cask down as if it were running on a tram-line.'

'Sounds all right,' said the Secretary brightly, watching my Chief Boatswain's Mate, as he laid out his tackles.

A sound of stertorous breathing, words of gentle objurgation, and a heavy rumbling noise heralded the approach of the barrel from the back premises.

It came thundering round the corner, looming to my vision huge and portentous. Somehow, in some vague manner, I received a distinct impression of its squat and malevolent antipathy, so that the thought crossed my mind: 'You're no ordinary barrel, we'll have to watch you, my lad.'

I looked round thankfully. The oldest member had not yet arrived, and there were no wondering servitors present to confuse the issue. Most jobs are better done without an audience, even though it be a dumb one.

Never, I thought, had I realised that those white stone steps were so steep, or so narrow. And they seemed to stretch away into infinity.

At that early stage of the proceedings, the vast 36-gallon cask seemed docile and dull. Not yet had it displayed those fiendish qualities of impish malevolence and volcanic acrobaticism that later were to strike anxiety into us all.

No, at that moment, with the sun shining fair and hot on the terrace, and the flower-beds blazing with massed wads of colour, it appeared quite an ordinary cask.

'Now, sorr,' reported Michael O'Halloran, 'it's thinking I am we are ready to get her under way.' He scratched his head dubiously, and regarded the upper bight of the parbuckle which was made fast round a vast post—one of the supports for the little side verandah-roof under which we were standing. 'It's so cluttered up with ramblers and roses, sorr, we cannot see the wood, but it's hoping I am it's an honest post and strong.'

The Secretary snorted. 'Oh, you needn't worry about that,' he said. 'That would hold a house.'

'Maybe, sorr,' agreed the Chief Boatswain's Mate, 'but a lively barrel—and containing beer, ye have to be careful.'

'All right, Chief Petty Officer O'Halloran,' I said cheerfully; 'let her go!'

The parbuckle, under the old Irishman's experienced eye, worked smoothly and efficiently. The leading-hand and A.B. Cox on one end of the rope, and Brown and Trelawny on the other, kept in step and the huge barrel went down the breakneck steps with hardly a bump, and on a level keel.

I sighed with relief and glanced proudly at the Secretary. 'You see,' I began, then I jumped suddenly, for an ominous creak sounded from the flower-bedecked post, round which the bight of the rope stood bar-taut.

'Vast lowering——' I roared; but, at that instant, there was a sudden frightful crash of rending wood, and even as my amazed eyes were fastened on to the post, I saw it bulge outwards as if some giant had negligently leant against it.

The Secretary and I and Michael O'Halloran leapt for safety—but we were too late. With a dull roar, the stout roof support broke in two, and the roof itself descended on our unprepared heads, flattening us out. For a dazed instant, the world seemed to be full of old tiles, older birds' nests, cockroaches, and even the birds themselves, disturbed and protesting in outraged chirrups.

Fortunately, it was just a simple, tiled roof, though heavy and old with moss, and after squirming round and removing my cap which had been driven down over my eyes, I managed to heave myself out.

I was just in time to see the barrel disappearing down the steps in gigantic bounds, chased by two seamen and the leading-hand, who, callously, to my dazed mind, seemed to pay no heed whatsoever to the unfortunate Trelawny, who,

firmly tethered by the bight of rope and festooned in ramblers, was disappearing down the steps on his face, in the wake of the barrel.

Glancing round, I espied a scandalised countenance still wearing a monocle and decorated with a huge bird's nest perched coyly on its panama-hat, peering out at me from a hole in the roof. Simultaneously, a tremendous subterranean heaving preluded the appearance of a saddened Michael O'Halloran. I helped him out—hastily.

'Retrieve the Secretary !' I roared at him. 'Then bring along the tackles full speed !'

Not waiting, I rushed down the steps towards the sound of several dull booms reverberating in the distance.

Leaping through the hole in the fence occasioned by the fugitive barrel, I found myself in a small patch of wood and undergrowth, dark and dank. Cries, curses, and exhortations, came clearly from below me. Twenty yards on, rounding a bush torn out by the roots, I came across Trelawny, sitting up and rubbing his head. He had cut himself adrift with his clasp-knife. He was not badly hurt—only dazed.

Helping him up, we rushed on, together, full-speed ; for the most frightful cacophony sounded all at once from behind the cover of the thick undergrowth ahead. A veritable bedlam arose. Dogs barked, children and women screamed, men yelled, and punctuating all, there came the dull thuds of the barrel in flight. Sliding down a steep descent, we arrived in the back courtyard of a small native homestead, where the fowls rose screeching in the air and, through clouds of dust, men and women and children ran shrieking for cover. Poor souls, what kind of visitation they thought they were being subjected to, heaven alone knows !

Then, at last, we sighted the miscreant.

Appearing from round the corner of the native-house, it executed a frightful bound and went through a ramshackle outhouse, like a tank going through a hen-coop. Hot in pursuit of it, uttering war-whoops and whirling bights of rope in the form of lassoes, sped the faithful leading-hand with his henchmen Cox and Brown.

‘Cut her off, lads!’ roared a voice almost in my ear. ‘She’ll be taking the traffic off Main Street, sorr, if she gets there, like a dairymaid of Cork would be skimming the cream from a bowl of milk!’ So spoke the horrified Michael O’Halloran.

The hunt was on again. Racing through thick bush, dodging round trees, we tried to corner that demoniacal barrel; almost one could feel its fiendish delight in freedom, as bounding high, it cannoned off trees and grazed rocks.

Twice, the cunning of O’Halloran almost outwitted its erratic ingenuity. Standing fair in its path and rolling sea-oaths at its advancing threat, he attempted to stopper its way with a vast log of wood. But the barrel, leaping playfully aside, disappeared with a resounding crash down a small ravine.

‘Bump, bump, bump!’ we heard it go.

‘Sorr, it’ll be a dead loss: not a dram of the beer but’ll be spread over the face of Spain like holy wather in an earthquake, if it’s not stopping it we are!’ panted the Chief Boatswain’s Mate, as we raced in its wake, sliding dangerously down the precipitous slope.

Arriving at the bottom, the whole working-party, its fighting blood aroused, uttered a loud ‘view-halloa!’ as the errant cask bounded into its field of vision, going great guns straight for the main road. We had come down a long way, but its energy seemed unimpaired; its velocity,

or speed rather, for its course was rarely straight, undiminished.

Racing in its track, feverishly, we computed the awful damage that 400 pounds of devilish matter charged with dynamic inertia might accomplish in our absence. Just then, ahead, another bedlam broke loose.

'It's breaking up another happy home, sorr,' panted Michael O'Halloran.

It was, or, rather, it had : for, issuing from the undergrowth, we passed, like remorseful ghosts, silent, in the wake of the destruction it had carved out of a previously ordered native dwelling. A stout native-woman stood wringing her hands, regarding the ruins of a series of hen-roosts, sheds, and lean-tos—that leant no more.

'We will see to it, Señora, do not worry,' I roared, as we flashed over the battle-field.

Fifty yards on and down, we saw the barrel strike some obstruction and, turning almost on its chine, spin drunkenly before coming once more on an even bilge.

With shouts of triumph, we hurtled forward, A.B.'s Cox and Trelawny—the latter with a personal grievance—slung their lassos over the barrel.

The ropes tautened : hasty turns were secured round handy trees ; then the cask seemed to squirm, and with an angry 'flip' cavorted out of the nooses and fled as if the devil were on its heels.

Groans of disappointment filled the air, as we once more took the field.

'A hundred yards, sorr, and we're in the Main Street !' roared Michael O'Halloran, bending his leathery old body almost double, as he dashed forward with redoubled energy. 'It's the divil and all will know phwhat will happen there !'

But notwithstanding our breakneck speed, as we hurtled

down that last rock-studded 100 yards, we could do no more than just keep station on that swift, infernal, rotund cask that rolled the hillside like a grizzly bear in pain and fury.

And now the Main Street loomed traffic-ridden ahead. The cry of hawkers, the tinkling bells of scraggy horses drawing rickety *carrozze*—the local spidery four-wheelers—came ominously to our ears.

Right down the middle of a passage between two shops, with devilish precision and speed, rolled the barrel : then, with our hearts in our mouths, we saw it hurtle across the pavement straight as a die and continue across the road.

Into our field of vision loomed the inevitable cab : the horse of which, catching sight of some unknown monster advancing rapidly towards it, shied violently and, breaking its traces, galloped out of sight down the street. Then horror of horrors, we saw a vast purple countenance lowering out of the cab, as if to enquire what was going on. An Admiral ! Gold lace, to our feverish eyes, seemed swathed with frightful significance, from the cuff to the elbow of the sleeve in view.

‘Admiral Sir Harry——’ I heard Michael O’Halloran groan. ‘Sure the ind of the world will come quick now.’

Then we shuddered, and, metaphorically, closed fast our eyes ; for with a final impish abandon, the barrel crashed into one of the back wheels of the cab, removing it clean as a whistle, so that the ancient vehicle canted sharply over in an awful list to starboard, while its apoplectic occupant struggled feverishly in the maze of curtains and cushions, that, finally, flooded him out into the road.

Continuing its devastating course, the cask rumbled across the farther pavement, and entering the wide-open doorway of a trader’s shop, disappeared from view, followed by a veritable hail of brassware that, descending like a torrent

from shelves and hooks, bounced and boomed and clanged on the stone floors with a sound like a brass band demented to the verge of frenzy.

Michael O'Halloran groaned audibly as he and I staggered forward to unwrap that figure—foaming at the mouth—from the débris in the road.

'It's the end of us it will be, sorr !' muttered my Chief Boatswain's Mate. 'Pensions and all, and the Good Conduct Badges will be after flying from our arms like the forest eaves in County Kerry when struck by the gale. An angry admiral, unhorsed by a barrel !' O'Halloran groaned anew, 'and him swathed up in the cab-curtains like a new-born babe in its early clothes !'

With a tremendous clucking of his tongue, indicative of a violent amicability and desire to show tenderness, Michael O'Halloran bravely sorted out the struggling figure alluded to.

A terrible scene. In the distance, the cab-owner, faint but pursuing, while near by a small crowd, non-committal, interested.

We led the apoplectic figure, gingerly, to the inside of the shop where a chair was produced. In the far end of the shop, speaking in muffled tones, the leading-hand and able-seamen Cox, Brown, and Trelawny, prepared with many ropes and tackles to retrieve the barrel, whose shining surface now gleamed and glistened in the dark shadow, as if it wore a malicious smile, from the depths of a vast wardrobe into which it had thrust its unexpected bulk. Near by, wringing his hands, the native proprietor mouthed and gurgled.

Gradually, the Admiral recovered. He had not been hurt—physically : but when he found breath to talk . . . we listened painfully with drooping heads.

It was Michael O'Halloran, of course, who saved the day. He had saved many in his time.

'Faith, sorr,' he explained. 'Twas a parbuckle tha would have held an elephant, and him mad and rampaging but 'twas the Club-house that parted. A twelve-inch pos seemingly solid as rock, but actually rotten as wormwood and faith the roof came down till the Secretary's head wa shining through it, and him with his panama hat still on in the middle of a bird's nest and we a-chasing down the step with leps like the widow Moriarty and not a minute to spare. 'Twas worse, sorr, than the Boer War, when we crossec the Fish River with the stores of a regiment and only Patsy Donoghue's foot, that a crocodile had taken a fancy to missing the other side . . .'

The Admiral, whose attention had been suddenly aroused got up and inspected my Chief Boatswain's Mate. All a once, a beaming smile spread over his face.

'Chief Petty Officer O'Halloran,' he announced. 'You were a leading seaman in the naval brigade in Africa. And now, I suppose you're a Reservist, back again, like me I'm,'—the Admiral drew himself up proudly—'I'm back too.'

He beamed again.

'There's life in we old stagers yet : still can do a job of work : not so hot as it was on the banks of the Orange River . . .'

For a few moments, the old Admiral, some seventy-five years old, and my Chief Boatswain's Mate, a little younger, chatted amicably about olden times.

The atmosphere had miraculously changed. Meanwhile : soberly, sternly, guarding the eventful cask as a guard watches a homicidal maniac, the little party trundled the recalcitrant barrel outside.

'Get the strongest vehicle you can find: wedge the confounded thing into it and lash it down, and then sit on it,' I ordered Michael O'Halloran. 'I'll be back in a moment. I'm going to get some of this dust off, next door.'

The Admiral drew me into the lounge of the hotel, and plied me with questions regarding my ship: my Captain, and our work generally—in the most friendly way. Yes, the atmosphere had certainly changed. I got rid of the dust—from my throat as well—and in a few minutes had returned.

The faithful O'Halloran awaited me, putting the finishing touches to a lashing that would have held the bower anchor of a battleship.

The barrel rested between the two seats of a cab, whose driver on the box gesticulated faintly, his face pale with anxiety, his eyes on his drooping pessimistic horse.

Seated firmly on top of the barrel was A.B. Trelawny, a grim smile of triumph lighting his features.

On either side, with ready hand on the chines, stood A.B.'s Cox and Brown.

O'Halloran saluted.

'We've got her this time, sorr.'

'Right, carry on, Chief Petty Officer O'Halloran,' I said. 'Watch it all the way: never leave the confounded thing for a moment: I'll follow.'

Standing on the pavement, I watched the cavalcade, after considerable effort on the part of the horse, assisted by willing helpers in the crowd, get under way.

A cheer from the onlookers was answered by A.B. Trelawny, seated high on the bung of the cask. He took off his cap and waved it.

They passed out of sight, swaying ominously. I followed in another cab at a respectful distance. Cheers and backchat from the thronged pavements sounded faintly in the distance.

I shuddered and cursed the skipper fervently under my breath, looking with nonchalance into shop-windows, for I had had enough of the cask.

We arrived finally out on the jetty, at the landing-steps : a watchful, dishevelled company. The barrel was unloaded ; the cabby overpaid ; and a ' handy-billy ' tackle rove from a davit for the embarkation of our tough passenger.

The cox'n of the motor-boat looked unfavourably at the freight. We should all be glad, I reflected, to see the end of that confounded cask.

It was a quarter before eight bells—almost noon.

Then the last malicious effort of the barrel to render our lives uneasy, occurred. It slipped, miraculously, out of a perfectly adjusted sling, and as near as anything fell into the bottom of the motor-boat. It would have gone clean through it.

Michael O'Halloran wiped the sweat from his brow.

' It's bewitched, sorr. It should have been shivered long ago, yet nary a leak. 'Tis my belief it is T.N.T. it holds, or one of they dynamite acids. I wouldn't drink a sup of it for the whole of the pastures of Kerry.'

We got it on board eventually. Dusty, hot, disgruntled, I reported to the Captain. I found him perusing a signal that had just been handed to him.

Silently, he looked from the signal-pad to that vast cask that sat leering at us from the trim white of the quarter-deck.

' A pity,' said my skipper sadly, handing me the signal.

' Yes,' I choked thoughtfully, ' a great pity, sir.'

The signal was from our old friend, the Secretary of the Club. It said, briefly, a mistake had been made : we had been given the wrong cask : a condemned one.

THE BANDIT AND THE BULLION.

BY WILLARD PRICE.

WE were a rum lot.

Waiting for the 'plane to warm up, we stood in the morning mist on the Tokyo airfield and looked each other over.

The American automobile salesman had been in Japan so long that he bought his clothes there—and they did not fit him. Beer-barrel trousers on a bean-pole figure. With every step one of his shoes asked a question and the other replied in the negative. But he did know Japan—and he knew our fellow-passengers. Without troubling to introduce himself to me—on the god-forsaken side of the world white men need no introduction—he introduced me to them.

One was a major with a sword and medals. He was on his way to Manchukuo to join a punitive expedition in pursuit of bandits. He looked like a piece of granite. But he crumbled a little round the edges when he set eyes upon the geisha.

Seeing her, one suddenly appreciated the truth of the old Chinese proverb, 'One look is worth a thousand words.' She was a snare. Her sunburst of a kimono and obi, her mountainous coiffure stuck with Christmas-tree ornaments, and the cunning make-up on her little doll face, all gave warning that she was out for blood. She had broken off diplomatic relations and mobilised on every front. The salesman squeaked his prettiest for her—but he was not her meat. She didn't know I existed. She gave the major an occasional flash, as if just to keep him in the running.

But the main barrage of her devastating sidelong glances fell upon the bandit.

Really an ex-bandit, the salesman said, and now governor of a district in Manchukuo. But he looked capable of reverting to type at any moment. A romantic devil, tall, straight, a mixture of Mongol and Manchu, powerful as a bull, yet polished. A little the intellectual prizefighter type. He astonished me with good English—and it came out that he had done time at London University.

Then there was a guard who bulged with revolvers. It seems there was some bullion in the baggage compartment bound for Mukden and he was along to see that it got there.

We were off—on what the Japan Air Transport should advertise, but does not, as the world's most picturesque air-trip. I have some familiarity with the air routes of North and South America, Europe and Africa, and have made the flight from Egypt to India. Nowhere that I know of is there anything to equal this jaunt along the volcanic backbone of Japan; above that perfect picture, the Inland Sea done in water-colours; over the sails of the Straits; up through hermit Korea; and across Manchukuo, last stand of banditry, to the Russian droshky bells of the Siberian border.

First, that dizzy contrast of new and old, Tokyo. In the distance, the Imperial Palace—which we would not have flown over even if we had been near enough to do so, for no man may look down upon the Son of Heaven. Round the Palace, hoary stone walls. Hanging over the walls, giant pines and cryptomerias, admiring themselves for centuries at a stretch in the waters of the old moat. Within that ancient setting, the oldest ruling dynasty in the world, its unbroken line reaching back more than two thousand

years and claiming divine descent from Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess.

Outside the moat, modern Tokyo, and an almost continuous city to and including Yokohama. Wireless towers, cinema palaces, department stores, streets black with fifty-sen taxis. Samurai in coats and pants. A general air of breathless haste. Must catch up with the rest of the world—and pass it.

The Orient slow : Take aviation for example. Most of the aeroplanes in use in Japan are made there. If there had been any lingering thought in our minds of a Japan of temples and pagodas, it would have been dispelled as we got into the maelstrom of 'planes that filled the air about the Yokosuka Naval Base. The major was much excited. He pointed to a white monoplane, then wrote on his conversation pad :

'Donated by the barbers.'

There had been something in the paper about it the day before. Ten thousand barbers had so increased the persuasiveness of their 'Shampoo, sir ?' that they had been able to present a 'plane to the navy. Another thirteen thousand barbers in the island of Kyushu, by similar patriotic super-salesmanship, had added one more fighting 'plane to the army.

The whole nation takes enormous pride in the air force. The tofu (bean-curd) association of Tokyo recently advanced the price of tofu one sen a piece, and made 'planes out of tofu. Primary school teachers to the number of 220,000 contributed one sen monthly from their salaries to provide two 'planes, one for the army and one for the navy. Students frequently undertake such a project, and assemble in force when their 'plane is commissioned in a solemn patriotic ceremony followed by aerial stunting.

We slid past the Miura Peninsula where Commodore Perry once landed and shamed Japan out of her medievalism—little realising what he was starting! I could personally testify that he chose a beautiful spot; looking down I could make out the native Japanese house I have taken for a year on the rocky, pine-hung Miura coast.

Now, far out to sea, appeared the smoke of the volcano Mihara on the island of Oshima. And far inland, through the crystal air, we could discern or imagine the smoke of Asama. The salesman bawled through my cotton wadding: 'Mihara. Suicide a day keeps the blues away.'

There were eight hundred suicides in Mihara last year. It would seem that anyone who has energy enough to climb a mountain to commit suicide has energy enough to keep on living. But the Japanese like their immolation with gestures. Gas and poison are too prosy.

The real point is that they regard suicide not as a disgraceful, sneaking exit from life to be skulked through, but as an offering to the sacred fires. There is something of the old Moloch-idea in it. If Earth won't have them, they give themselves back to the gods. The volcanoes are constituted as Shinto shrines. They are the special abode of spirits. If life must be given, it should be given where it will appease the unknown powers and benefit the nation. Thus volcano suicide takes on some of the heroism that colours seppuku (hara-kiri).

Last summer I climbed Asama in the chance company of eight students. There were seven on the way down. One of the seven carried a letter addressed to the family of the boy who had gone to death in the boiling lava. No one seemed perturbed by what had happened—but then, a Japanese is like a volcano. There may be plenty of perturbation within, but it rarely shows on the outside.

Winging toward Hakone, we now approached the greatest of all sacred mountains—Fuji-san. An extinct volcano, therefore harmless, but annually climbed as a religious duty by twenty thousand pilgrims. But not at this wintry season of the year. Fuji was now a gleaming cone of white, the more startling since all the mountains below it were black, with no trace of snow. Like a huge inverted fan (a favourite Japanese comparison) Fuji seemed suspended in the sky as if held from above by some invisible hand. A black speck on its white flank rapidly grew larger ; finally resolved itself into an aeroplane which flew past us.

‘Marquis Hachisuka,’ scribbled the major.

The premier sportsman pilot of Japan. Well known for his adventures in Europe and Africa, his predilection for playing around volcanoes and snowy peaks, and his encouragement of civil aviation, especially student flying.

Tea was served by our air hostess. She was a snappy little Nipponese maid who acted as conductress, waitress and guide, and spoke all languages with an equal lack of facility. The party loosened up. Scribblings and shoutings became more frequent. The major seemed to be making a definite pass at the geisha. The bandit noticed it and his bushy brows huddled. The major gave her an air pillow. The bandit put a shot of something in her tea. They acted like two youngsters after the same stick of candy. She led them both on. The Japanese geisha is just another slice of the original eternal feminine. Every woman is as old as the earth—but a man grows up green every spring. Too bad neither suitor could sit beside her. But the eight seats were arranged four on either side of the cabin. However, it was not far for helping hands to reach across the aisle.

The way the lady played the two off against each other was a treat to watch. In her profession a woman acquires

the ability to weigh men on the hoof at a glance. She had them figured to the last gram, and every gram leaned her way—Pisa-like, only waiting for an invitation to fall.

‘To-night we’ll see who’s who,’ scribbled the salesman. Cupid is handicapped in a ‘plane. But we should all have to spend the night in some Fukuoka hotel.

The ‘plane began to bump. We looked down to see Lake Ashi (Hakone), surrounded by mountains. And farther inland, past Fuji and beyond, more mountains as far as the eye could see. Only fifteen per cent of Japan can be cultivated—the rest is mountains. The average Japanese farm is two acres. Rice fields are terraced like steps up mountain-sides. If you want to perform an equivalent feat, try to build ponds on a mountain-side. For every paddy must be a pond, with the rice up to its waist in water. Every spot that can possibly be levelled is utilised. Some of the fields are no bigger than two handkerchiefs. Every blade of rice is set in by hand.

But at least there are two advantages in having plenty of mountains. They rejoice the soul of the artistic and poetic Japanese ; and they provide an abundance of water-power. In no other land will you find so many poems pinned to cherry branches—and nowhere else, not even in America, is electricity so widely used in remote country districts.

We crossed Ise Bay and looked far out to the tip of Ise Peninsula, famous for its piety and pearls. On the shore is the Japanese Mecca, the most sacred shrine of Japan. In the water are the Mikimoto pearl fields where violated oysters are forced to have pearls whether they want them or not. An unfeeling operator insinuates a grain of irritation within the shell, and the oyster builds up a pearl around the annoyance.

We skirted the great park of old Nara where the tame deer

make themselves guests at every picnic. Then a Pittsburgh smudge on the sky announced Osaka, chief industrial city of Japan. We had left Tokyo at nine-thirty and were due to alight among the chimneys of Osaka at twelve noon. Japanese 'planes and trains have an uncanny habit of arriving on time and we touched the Osaka airfield while the noon whistles were blowing.

The major appropriated the geisha. The bandit, probably in disgust, invited me to lunch. We had *unagi to gohan*—eels and rice—a delicious dish for the unimaginative. I kept reminding myself that an eel is really not a snake. The bandit, I think, did not know what he was eating.

'Yes,' he said mechanically. 'Nice trip. We get to Fukuoka at four-ten.'

'We spend the night there, don't we?'

'Yes, we spend the night there.'

But if I had expected him to betray himself by his tone or manner, I was disappointed. His Oriental mask was well set.

We took off at one, in another 'plane, and rose into a suddenly stormy and exceedingly bumpy sky. The fickleness of the weather in Japan makes things easy for the weather-man. Anything he may prophesy will come true. He could write out his daily forecasts six months in advance, for they all run about the same, to wit: 'Fair. Showers. Wind variable.' So complex as to be simple for him—but still complex for the pilot! Since Japan belongs neither to the continent nor to the Pacific, divides its allegiance between the frigid and the torrid zones, and twists the air into knots with its icy mountains and warm Japan Current, the pilot has to worry about 286 pressures a year, 148 days of rain, and many more days of hand-before-your-face visibility.

The clouds which had suddenly smothered us above Osaka

as suddenly parted, as if drawn aside by a master showman to reveal Nature's prize pageant, the Inland Sea. This magnificent waterway is over two hundred miles long and varies from three to thirty miles in width. It is a maze of mountainous islands. Many of the mountains were high—but the shadow of our 'plane climbed each slope with easy grace and tobogganed down the other side into the sea. Hundreds of white-sailed fishing-boats and a few black-plumed steamers staggered through the labyrinth of islands.

Quaint, isolated island-villages suggested old-time Japan. But in one of them, as we flew low, we saw a motion-picture company at work, with a score of actors and elaborate equipment, cameras, sound apparatus, even Klieg lights to supplement the fitful sun.

The geisha shrilly sang the theme song from a recent American picture—then continued to entertain with 'Auld Lang Syne,' 'Shall we gather at the River' and other standbys, venerable in the West, current in Japan. Japanese words had been fitted to the melodies. She and the salesman gave a bilingual rendering of 'Old Kentucky Home.' Then the salesman, on his own hook, burst forth with 'Maryland my Maryland.' The geisha frowned. The major turned and glowered. The bandit stared. It was enough to embarrass even a salesman. He stopped.

'What's the matter?' he wanted to know.

'This song,' said the major. 'You know what it is?'

'Of course. An American song. Maryland my Maryland.'

It was the major's turn to look astonished. '*Sa! So desu ka?* I did not know it was an American song.'

'What did you think it was?'

'The same tune is used by the communists in Japan—for

their song of revolution. Very dangerous to be heard singing it. The police would not know it had ever been a foreign song. They would not believe you. You would go to gaol.'

The salesman experimented with no more songs. The major occasionally scrutinised him doubtfully out of the corners of his eyes.

That is a sample of the way the East has so thoroughly assimilated some things Western that she does not realise that they ever were Western. Frequently in speaking about some object as occidental as a sewing machine, or a Whirlwind engine, Japanese friends have naïvely asked me, 'Do they have that in your country too?'

The salesman was mortified by his unwitting skid into the rebel song of the Reds. He tried to make up for it by showing his knowledge, really considerable, of Japan.

'Fish 'planes,' he said, indicating three ships flying not more than thirty feet above the glassy surface. 'They locate schools of fish for the trawling fleets.'

Thus the oldest industry of sea-girt, fish-eating Japan has been modernised. When a school is discovered, the 'plane reports to a central fish research office on the coast, a siren rouses the villages and the men take to the boats.

We came down at Fukuoka, went to a Japanese inn, and all met again in the bath. The geisha did not look so attractive without her clothes. The bandit, on the other hand, gained by nudity. He was a Mongol god. The major, too, had lost nothing by removing his uniform. He was a military man through and through and, even in the tub, looked as if he still had his sword.

I could feel the rebuking shade of my grandmother near me in that bath. Grandmother not only bathed in strict privacy, but used to cloud the water with bran.

The bath is the only public room of a Japanese inn. There is no lounge, no dining-room. Social life is limited to the bathing hour. Once towelled, kimono'd and out, there is nothing doing the rest of the evening, except a solitary meal in your own room, and a curse or two at the hardness of the oat-filled pillow when you crawl in between the futons on the floor.

Solitude—unless you call in a geisha. That is what the bandit did, and the geisha was our travelling companion. Her voice, raised in song and accompanied by samisen, pierced the paper partitions. The bandit, as the sake warmed him, roared like the bull of Bashan. One time upon going out into the corridor I saw the major standing, smiling, near the *fusuma*, the sliding paper doors, of the bandit's room. He was talking quietly with the guard responsible for the safe arrival of the bullion in Manchukuo. The major seemed in the best of spirits, anything but heart-broken.

I arrived at the airport in the morning to see two policemen relieving the bandit of his revolvers.

'He's been placed under arrest,' said the salesman, who should have been a reporter, so delicately attuned was his nose for news. 'Last night he told the geisha too much. Seems he is still in with some bandit gang in Manchukuo.'

'Will he be held here?'

'No. He'll have to go to Hsinking for trial. So he'll travel along with us.'

A pleasant travelling companion—a powerful and resentful prisoner! He was not handcuffed. After all, he was still governor, and unconvicted. He was seated immediately in front of the revolver-bulging guard. That worthy must now watch over both the bullion and the bandit—and observe a nice distinction between them.

The blocks were removed at eight-forty and we were off

for the mainland of Asia. Below us a school of porpoises rose and fell like a living black wave in the Straits which separate Japan from Korea. A copper radio antenna dangled from the 'plane and seemed almost to touch the sails of the fishing fleets and the top of the white lighthouse where all the family peered out and waved. Then the antenna was reeled up in time to escape being swallowed by a crowd of gaping Koreans who had quit work (if they had ever begun it) to see us land.

The Korean is the world's best looker-on. Japanese flit past him, but he stands as immovable as the Buddha carved in the cliff of Pirobang. His whole costume is that of a spectator; surely no man could ever do any work in those wooden gondola shoes, the voluminous white skirt, and enormous mushroom hat as expansive as an umbrella. Some vary the style in headgear by affecting a large but jaunty fly-trap, worn a little off centre, and held on by two ribbons tied in a bow under the chin. Through the loosely woven horsehair of this creation, the breezes come and go and the topknot which indicates the married man may be plainly seen. In the topknot is a small steel lightning-rod. It is guaranteed to divert the evil spirits, including that of a wife.

Devil-dread is the dominant force in the life of the Korean. Even the airlines feel the effect of it. Once when a little digging for foundation work was done on this landing field at Urusan, an official delegation came from the mayor's office to protest. The dragon which protected the town lay close beneath the surface of the soil. If his head or tail should be injured, dire results would ensue. It was found politic to shift the digging operations to a point where, according to a necromancer, the dragon's body would not be touched.

Also it is difficult to find a tract of land for a flying field where there are not a few humpy Korean graves. There is

a great to-do if these are destroyed and the vengeful spirits scattered.

The aeroplane, with its devilish-looking motors, is regarded with suspicion. The Korean's science is simple—to him it is not *Deus ex machina* but the demons in the machine that make it go. When the first trolley cars of Seoul were introduced by an American, they were stoned and derailed by a fanatical mob. After Japan took over Korea the people found it necessary to endure machines, and the first aeroplanes were not attacked. But even to-day the swaying mudan (sorceresses) in the devil-houses along the route make protective passes when the roar of a 'plane is heard. Many a sickness is blamed upon the evil eye of the devil-bird.

We flew over the round hills of Korea, once denuded but not being reforested, and came down, forty minutes after noon, at Seoul. There we had just time to snatch a bento (a lunch on the wing) and observe an odd incident. Some time before, a Korean had died in one of the airport buildings. Now that, it seems, was not according to Hoyle. The Koreans believe a man must die at home. Otherwise his spirit will wander homeless. So the relatives of the deceased had come to get his spirit and take it home. A strip of red carpet had been stretched from the point where death had occurred through the building and out the front door. On the end of the carpet, near a waiting taxi, stood a box containing food. A sorceress danced and chanted down the carpet, enticing the spirit to the box which it entered in quest of food. The lid was clamped on, the box placed in the taxi, and the spirit triumphantly borne homeward.

We rose and looked down upon a beggar with a silk hat. That is the impression given by Seoul, city of squalor and splendour. Its thousands of mean little huts covered with straw thatch rounded at the corners so that they resemble

huddling beetles are in sharp contrast to the magnificent buildings of the Japanese Governor-General and modern commercial structures.

We sped north to Pyengyang, informed that somnolent city by our arrival that the time was 2 p.m., and flew on after a ten-minute stop to Singisyu. The only apparent reason for the existence of Singisyu is that it marks the end of Korea and the beginning of Manchukuo. Passports and customs. Here the Japan Air Transport 'plane (bound for Dairen) connects with the line of the Manchuria Aviation Co.—and we changed to a 'plane that would take us to Mukden and Hsinking.

Over Manchukuo at last. It evidently had the appeal of home to the bandit, for I noticed that he never took his eyes from the ground scudding below us. Like a general studying his field of operations he surveyed this 'bandits' paradise'—now gradually becoming a paradise lost. The bandits have long been the aristocracy of Manchuria. Chang Tso-lin himself, ruler of Manchuria, was an ex-bandit. Under his buccaneer rule, bandits were a sort of clandestine nobility, to be publicly condemned but privately favoured. The gentlemen of this profession are said to have numbered 200,000. Now the authorities claim the number has been cut to a quarter. That is progress—yet 50,000 organised robbers and murderers still constitute a problem.

We saw worry over this problem writ large across the forehead of Manchukuo below us. The long horizontal lines of the railroad showed anxiety in a multiplicity of forts at the ends of bridges and tunnels and at hidden turns, guns peeping from their embrasures; heavy barricades of sandbags surrounding stations; three-ply hurdles of barbed-wire entanglements bearing insulators, indicating that they could be electrified; breastworks of gravel sandwiched between

timbers, some of them peppered with gun-fire ; camouflaged freight cars and troop trains ; other camouflaged cars mounted with cannon ; soldiers everywhere ; scout 'planes reconnoitring.

Western ideas of bandits in mild little groups of twos and threes do not hold in the East. Here they travel in bands of three thousand or more. Hence every point must be prepared for a mass attack at any time. It is nothing short of a continued, and continuous, state of war. And conservative army men do not look for complete victory in less than a decade.

Something of this pride and strength of banditry was in our bandit's expression as he looked. He was not properly disheartened by his arrest. He kept smiling, and it was an odd smile. It made no wrinkles around the eyes ; it was a wolf smile, made only with the mouth. Ever since Fukuoka he had seemed quite satisfied with the world and very agreeable to the tattling geisha. The salesman had scribbled, 'He has something up his sleeve.'

At Mukden we learned what it was. We passed near the golf course which foreign residents patronise, but never without the precaution of carrying a rifle in the bag along with the golf sticks ; looked down upon the walled stronghold of the late ex-bandit warlord Chang, and a busy city which the Japanese are spending three million yen to modernise. Then the motors quit and we slid into the field. We stepped out of the cabin.

A salvo of shots was our welcome. What appeared to be a mob of ragged men, some in dirty uniforms, were making a rush on the airport. After our shipment of bullion ! Perhaps our bandit's confederates. That worthy did not move—the guard's revolver was in the small of his back. He continued to smile—but his smile went into

sudden eclipse when every building about the place disgorged scores, hundreds of soldiers who had evidently been in concealment, fully informed of the intended attack. Machine-guns went into action. The disciplined troops made short work of the mob. And when there was nothing more to see yonder but a cloud of dust, we looked back to find that the smile had now side-slipped to the major's face.

The bullion was transferred to an armoured automobile for delivery in the city, the bandit was taken to gaol for the night, and his fellow-passengers were escorted to an excellent hotel. We felt a twinge of conscience, I think, over the discrimination. All men sin—only he had been caught at it.

On we went the next morning, flying above the strongly fortified line of the South Manchuria Railway, to the fastest growing town in Asia, Manchukuo's new capital, Hsinking. We looked down upon a confusion of construction. Outside of the old city a new one was being erected. Hsinking has two hundred thousand people and expects a million.

We landed. We parted with the bandit almost tearfully—the geisha being particularly remorseful. This debonair swashbuckler appealed strongly to romantic imagination. He patronised the major . . . in gaol he would probably act as if he owned it, and he would not even trouble to smoke a cigarette before the firing squad.

But we still had the geisha and the salesman with us as we winged northward. Also there was a new passenger—a Russian who hid behind a veritable Birnam's wood of beard. This did not daunt the geisha. She cultivated a future customer, for the Russian lived in the town to which she had been consigned.

To Harbin, then west over the Hsingan Mountains to the land of the Mongols.

Below us now were wide plains where Mongol cowboys

on horseback tended vast herds—thousands upon thousands of sheep, cattle, half-wild horses.

Moving across the roadless plains, like ships sailing by compass, were caravans of camels.

Frequently we saw tiny villages made up of yurts (dome-shaped tents), guarded by great, savage dogs. The Mongols, gypsy-like, pick up their tents and move wherever the grass is best for their herds and flocks.

This is the greatest stock-raising country in all Asia. It is what the visitor to the American 'Wild West' expects to see but does not. Nowhere in the world, not even in Argentina, can one see such a panorama of animals.

Down now at Manchouli on the Russian border. Our salesman catches the Trans-Siberian train for Moscow. Our Russian, although he speaks little English and I no Russian, takes me to his home. He takes the geisha too. Snowflakes are falling. We rattle through the streets in a Russian droshky, its high yoke projecting into the air above the horses' necks. Bells on the harness jingle with a frosty sound.

The geisha complains about the town. True, it is a dreary place for a Tokyo geisha. However, there are many sons of Nippon in this far outpost of Japanese authority, and they are able and willing to pay for their favourite entertainment. But first come, first serve—and the Russian lets her off at the geisha house only long enough to report. Then we go to his home to sip borsch, eat zakuska.

The geisha is silent and depressed. I wonder if it is the town, the strange dinner, or memories of our bandit friend. Evidently it is all three, for while our host roars over one of his own witticisms, she turns to me with a plaintive whisper :

'Oh ! I suppose the food in the gaol is terrible too.'

Hayama, Japan.

THE RETURN.

The house was empty when I came at last,
 After long wandering, home :
 And I was glad to lift the latch and come
 Through the white gate, and cast
 My eyes upon that loved, familiar place
 In silence, and alone.
 The snow lay on the eaves ; a narrow space
 Of dry and sheltered stone
 Beneath the porch was like some haven where
 My sodden feet could find
 Their first dear comfort, and it seemed all care
 Was with wet clothes consigned,
 When these, once laid aside, hung on the door
 From their accustomed hook.
 The faint light shone on rug and polished floor,
 Wide chair, and inglenook ;
 The clock struck clear its soft, unchanging chime.
 Crocus and daffodil
 This spring as other springs, time after time,
 Sweetened the window sill.
 These gentle things, inanimate, yet kind,
 Gave me their welcome, laid
 Their blessing on my weariness, and blind
 With sudden tears I prayed
 The ancient house, to which through centuries
 Swallow and prodigal
 Had turned to rest again, to give me peace,

*And on my soul let fall
Its own dear grace, untouched tranquillity,
Making my spirit one
With this my heritage, this home whence I
Had been too long ago.*

BARBARA BINGLEY.

TO A FRIEND BELIEVED BEGGARED.

*Yours is the lasting wealth of simple things,
The common heritage of earth and sky.
He who loves beauty knows not poverty,
For him her wanton largesse Nature flings ;
—Paints the wide canvas of the firmament ;
Sets music moving in the throbbing throat
Of a bird, and, with one long suspended note,
Nigh breaks his heart for loveliness. The scent
Of flowers strews incense round him. All delight
Is his, and all dominion. He is rich,
Rich beyond kings, though beggared to the ditch,
For he has vision where the rest have sight.*

*Then count yourself most happy, and despise
The world that sees not with your poet's eyes.*

A. V. STUART.

THE SELECT SOCIETY.

BY W. FORBES GRAY.

WHEN a body calling itself the Select Society becomes non-select mischievous results may be expected. You can, with advantage, broaden and increase the membership of most societies, but to do so in the case of a society bearing a name plainly suggestive of the élite is to court disaster. Such, in brief, is the lesson to be learnt from the perusal of a sombre-looking folio in the custody of the National Library of Scotland, and labelled 'Minutes of Select Society.'

The story of this, the most famous of the cultural societies which brought Edinburgh high literary distinction in the eighteenth century, has never been told, for the simple reason that the official record has only recently been made available. The Minutes of the Select Society afford striking proof of the value of an original document as compared even with contemporary testimony. Hitherto our knowledge of this body has been mainly derived from a short, perfunctory description which Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk prepared for Dugald Stewart when he was writing the biography of William Robertson, the historian. Carlyle was a prominent member of the Select Society, but in spite of this fact, his account is not above suspicion. What he wrote for Dugald Stewart differs in not unimportant particulars from the information contained in the Minutes. The discrepancies, however, are capable of explanation inasmuch as Carlyle penned his notes at a time when his memory might well play him false. Moreover, the fascination of his *Autobiography* notwithstanding, Carlyle was at

all times a slipshod writer. In any case the official record is to be preferred to his impressions, though it is aggravating that the Minutes end abruptly, and leave us without authoritative guidance concerning a most interesting but disastrous experiment, of which, had it not been for extraneous sources, we should never have known.

The Select Society was founded in Edinburgh on May 22, 1754. Henry Mackenzie (the 'Man of Feeling') says 'it was, properly speaking, a philosophic society, all manner of subjects' being discussed by 'the principal literary men of Edinburgh.' A secondary object was the promotion of 'the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland,' but that was a late development and so momentous as virtually to end the Society. The founder was the 'ingenious Allan Ramsay' (son of the poet of that name), who, along with 'two or three of his friends nominated and called together' fifteen persons. This formed the nucleus of the Society 'into which the members were ever after elected by ballot.'

The younger Ramsay was of wider culture than his father, the author of *The Gentle Shepherd: A Pastoral Comedy*. He was an excellent scholar and linguist, and had enlarged his outlook by much travel. 'You will not find a man in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information, and more elegance than in Ramsay's,' remarked Dr. Johnson, who was often his guest at 67 Harley Street. But the second Allan Ramsay's celebrity rests on the fact that he was a fashionable portrait-painter in Georgian England, for though he began his career in Edinburgh and signalled it thus early by founding the Select Society, the major portion of his life was lived in London, where he was a familiar figure in artistic and literary circles.

Dr. Carlyle's statement that the original membership was

restricted to thirty conflicts with the 'Rules and Orders,' which lay it down that the Society was to consist of fifty persons, though power was given to augment that number as circumstances might dictate. Unfortunately this proviso was taken advantage of to such an extent that the Society soon renounced all claim to being select. Within a twelve-month the membership exceeded a hundred, and by 1759 the figure stood at 130. The idea of the promoters was an aristocracy of intellect, the inclusion of all the distinguished *literati* of Scotland, and this certainly was achieved. But before long the Society, imitating the absurd practice of other learned bodies, admitted persons whose sole qualification for membership rested on high birth and titles. The infusion of blue blood made the Society very consequential, but in the end the nobility and gentry proved a hindrance rather than a gain. They were embarrassingly punctual in their attendance, and though they took little or no part, their presence apparently deterred certain members, who might have done well in the debates.

Among the original members, besides 'Mr. Alan Ramsay, Painter,' were 'Mr. Adam Smith, Professor at Glasgow'; David Hume, philosopher and historian; Hugh Blair, whose sermons Johnson admired; William Robertson, historian and Principal of Edinburgh University; John Home, author of the tragedy of *Douglas*; 'Jupiter' Carlyle of Inveresk; James Boswell, who was admitted in July, 1761; Alexander Wedderburn, who mounted the Wool-sack as Lord Loughborough; Lord Monboddo, a forerunner of Darwin; Sir Gilbert Elliot, statesman, essayist and poet; Lord Hailes, 'the restorer of Scottish history,' as Sir Walter Scott dubbed him; Sir Alexander Dick, whom Johnson visited and Boswell wished to make the subject of a biography; William Wilkie, 'The Scottish

Homer'; and George Dempster, the famous Parliamentary and agriculturist.

The Society met in the Advocates' Library, but when the membership increased to alarming proportions, the accommodation was too small and other premises had to be found. At the meetings, which were held on Wednesday evenings during the sittings of the Court of Session, the discussions, as we shall see, ranged over a wide variety of subject. Indeed, the only topics debarred were revealed religion and matters that might 'give occasion to vent any Principles of Jacobitism.' The exclusion of the latter subject was wise, considering that Edinburgh was a stronghold of Hanoverianism and had suffered as such less than ten years previously.

At first, the meetings seem to have attracted a large proportion of the members, but when the charm of novelty had worn thin, interest flagged and members became remiss in their attendance. Within three years of the founding of the Society, 'the most proper Methods for reviving its spirit' were being discussed, and as a contribution to the solution of the problem, it was decided that members who were absent from three successive meetings should be struck off the roll. But this proved ineffectual, and two months later it was reported that 'great numbers' were still absent, which implies that the Select Society had by this time falsified its name.

In extenuation of the widespread absenteeism, it was urged that Wednesday was unsuitable for meetings of the Society. 'Being one of the days on which the Post went for London,' members were too busy writing their letters for that city. The absence of members not only caused the debates to languish but had a prejudicial effect on the funds. In January, 1759, the Society was informed that

there were 'only 107 members residing in Scotland, who may be depended on for annual subscriptions,' which indicates that the vision of selectness had become rather attenuated. As a 'temporary expedient,' a committee was empowered to admit 'strangers, not of our own country, whose curiosity or business has brought them to this Metropolis.'

One of the strangers admitted under this rule, but afterwards elected a member, was Charles Townshend whom Burke characterised as 'the delight and ornament of the House of Commons.' High expectations of his carrying off the honours in debate were formed, but these, according to Carlyle and Henry Mackenzie, were disappointed. Carlyle says Townshend 'dazzled for a moment, but the brilliancy soon faded away, and left no very strong impression.' The 'Man of Feeling' endorses this view.

'He spoke very indifferently, and the Society could not understand whence he acquired his great reputation in Parliament; but he afterwards said himself that a new audience, for which from their known talents he felt much respect, had overawed him so much as to choke his powers of speaking. Fortunately, however, after discussion of the question for that evening, some accidental topic occurred on which several members spoke. Mr. Townshend had by that time recovered his composure, and made an excellent impromptu speech, which redeemed his character for eloquence with the Society.'

The arrangement relating to strangers did not work well. There were complaints that persons 'who were of this country' were being admitted, and an abrogation of the law was proposed. But it was finally decided to dispense with 'the qualification of the gentleman being a traveller and of the neighbouring Kingdom,' and to give the preses

discretionary power to introduce 'a gentleman of our own country.'

Carlyle says that Hume and Adam Smith 'never opened their lips,' but this is hardly credible seeing that the former was treasurer and presumably had to submit a statement of accounts, while the latter presided on several occasions, in which capacity he was expected to open the debate. As regards Hume, the Minutes expressly state that on June 26, 1754, it was resolved 'that David Hume Esq. be, and he consenting hereby is, appointed Treasurer to the Society. That he receive and give out the Society's money, as he shall see cause, and that he give in his Accounts once every year.' Adam Smith, on the other hand, was called upon at the second meeting to submit two questions for debate, one of which may very well have emanated from the author of the *Wealth of Nations* himself, namely, 'Whether bounties on the exportation of corn be advantageous to trade and manufactures as well as to agriculture?'

Walter Goodall, who was Clerk to the Society, was the earliest of the numerous apologists of Mary Queen of Scots, and it is interesting to recall that in the year in which the Select Society was founded he brought out in two volumes his *Examination of the Letters said to be written by Mary Queen of Scots to James, Earl of Bothwell*, a powerful apologetic which is still consulted. When Hume was Keeper of the Advocates' Library, Goodall acted as his assistant.

Carlyle of Inveresk vaguely alludes to the stimulating character of the 'conversation' at the meetings of the Society. Dugald Stewart, again, relying on second-hand knowledge, grandiloquently says that the debates were

'such as have not often been heard in modern assemblies—debates where the dignity of the speakers was not lowered by the intrigues of policy, or the intemperance of faction ;

and where the most splendid talents that have ever adorned this country were roused to their best exertions by the liberal and ennobling discussions of literature and philosophy.'

One of the most frequent and persuasive speakers was Principal Robertson. We are told that he gave 'most zealous support' to the Society, 'seldom omitting an opportunity of taking a share in its business; and deriving from it an addition to his own fame.' He is the subject of a quaint entry, dated February 15, 1757. 'William Robertson, to whose turn it fell to preside at next meeting, declared that it was very inconvenient for him to be in town on any precise day during the Winter season, as his ordinary residence was at some miles' distance, and pleaded for a substitute.' He was then parish minister of Gladsmuir (adjoining the battlefield of Prestonpans), and hard at work on his *History of Scotland*, which was published two years later.

Others who 'by their constant attendance and readiness on every subject supported the debates during the first year' were Sir Alexander Dick, Monro the anatomist, Lord Elibank, Sir Gilbert Elliot, and Wedderburn, the future Lord Chancellor. Later on, the debates were enlivened by Lord Monboddo and William Wilkie, author of the *Epi-
goniad*, both of whom 'had the peculiar talent of supporting their paradoxical tenets by an inexhaustible fund of humour and argument,' at least so Carlyle would have us believe.

Considering the object for which it was founded, the Society does not appear to have wasted much time on metaphysical subtleties. On the contrary, many of the topics discussed were thoroughly practical, others clearly reflected the trend of contemporary thought, while a small proportion were purely academic and now and then gravitated towards silliness. But as a rule the members exercised

their dialectical powers on subjects that really mattered. Had we been present when discussion centred in such questions as whether the number of banks in Scotland was likely to improve trade, or whether it were better to give money to the poor in their homes than to place them in workhouses and hospitals, we should have listened intently to what Adam Smith had to say. Again, the Society was to some extent anticipating the views of Henry Thomas Buckle when it debated a subject propounded by David Hume—namely, the relationship between national character and climate. Further, there was prescience in discussing in 1755 whether a union with Ireland would be advantageous to Great Britain. The Society was also ahead of the times in investigating what encouragement an academy for painting in Scotland was likely to receive, and in suggesting the propriety of reviving the Olympic Games. The members, too, were pioneers in problems affecting temperance and morals. They proposed restriction in the use of whisky as a means of curbing intemperance, which ‘usually becomes so remarkable (particularly amongst the vulgar) upon the increase of wealth.’

The Society were less purposeful when the discussions turned on whether Brutus did well in killing Cæsar ; whether it is more difficult to excel in tragedy than in comedy ; whether printing has been an advantage to society ? Nor was this all. On one occasion the pundits exercised their wits on the momentous question as to whether the practice of ladies painting their faces should be prohibited by Act of Parliament.

But it were wrong to suppose that the Select Society restricted itself to debate. From the outset, the achieving of something that would be of practical benefit to the country as a whole was never lost sight of. On February

12, 1755, at the instigation of Lord Hailes, it was agreed to raise funds for the encouragement of 'several usefull arts and manufactures in this Country' by the bestowal of premiums. A few months later, a committee was appointed to consider 'essays, questions and discoveries' relating to the 'Arts and Sciences' submitted by the members. The committee was divided into four sections, one for natural history and chemistry, another for 'pure and mixt mathematics,' the third for belles-lettres and literary criticism, and the fourth for history and politics.

In this attempt to co-ordinate existing knowledge the services of several eminent men were enlisted. These included John Hope, whose reputation as a botanist is attested by the fact that Linnæus named the genus *Hopea* after him; Robert Wallace, who as a writer on population stimulated Malthus; and Lord Kames, the literary antagonist of Hume. The strongest section was that dealing with belles-lettres, the reason being that the Society agreed to devote their surplus funds to giving prizes for the best literary dissertations. Accordingly the destinies of literature were entrusted to Hugh Blair, the first occupant of the Chair of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres in Edinburgh University; William Wilkie, the author of the *Epigoniad*; Adam Smith, who was a literary critic before he was a political economist; and David Hume.

Another evidence of the Society's desire to pass from the speculative to the practical side of life was forthcoming in February, 1760, when it was resolved to offer a gold medal for the best essay on the means of promoting public spirit. At the same time an effort was made to correct some abuses of the social system, in particular, 'the practice of giving vails or drink-money to servants.' Convinced that this custom tended to corrupt the morals of servants, obstruct

the exercise of hospitality, and destroy social intercourse, the members decided to 'exert themselves to the utmost to remove this publick nuisance.' The president, William Robertson, the historian, having recommended the resolution 'to the care of all the members upon their return to their own counties,' several 'persons of Quality and Distinction signified their intention to promote this laudable scheme.'

Though there is no reference to the matter in the Minutes, we learn from another source that in 1761 the Society addressed itself to 'the Herculean task of annihilating the Scottish tongue, and substituting the English language and pronunciation.' This movement received its chief impetus from two courses of lectures on elocution delivered in Edinburgh by Thomas Sheridan, actor and 'orthoepist,' father of the author of the *School for Scandal*. Among other things, Sheridan pointed out 'the true source of the difficulty . . . which all foreigners as well as natives of different kingdoms and countries, that speak a corrupt dialect of English, find in the attainment of the right pronunciation of that tongue.'

The lectures made a profound impression on the *literati*, who became 'painfully conscious that their vernacular had sunk from a national language of which to be proud, into a provincial dialect of which to be ashamed.' This led them to begin an intensive study of English, so that they might banish Scotticisms and all manner of accentual differences. And to show that they were in earnest they announced in the Press that a plan for studying the English tongue 'in a regular and proper manner' would be laid before the Select Society. Accordingly, at an early meeting of that body, there was submitted 'Regulations of the Select Society for promoting the Reading and Speaking

of the English Language in Scotland.' This remarkable document stresses the fact that 'gentlemen educated in Scotland have long been sensible of the disadvantages under which they labour from their imperfect knowledge of the English tongue, and the impropriety with which they speak it.' While it was possible for Scotsmen to write English 'with some tolerable purity,' success in speaking it 'with propriety' was not so certain, the opportunities for acquiring proficiency being relatively few.

'For these reasons the Select Society, at a very numerous meeting held in order to consider this matter, did unanimously declare it to be their opinion, that it would be of great advantage to this country if a proper number of persons from England, duly qualified to instruct gentlemen in the knowledge of the English tongue, the manner of pronouncing it with purity, and the art of public speaking, were settled in Edinburgh; and if, at the same time, a proper number of masters from the same country, duly qualified for teaching children the reading of English, should open schools in Edinburgh for that purpose.'

To promote this 'laudable design' a voluntary subscription was opened, and the management of the fund was vested in sixteen ordinary and ten extraordinary directors. The former were 'to employ as many teachers and masters as the funds will permit,' and fix the salaries.

A postscript to the 'Regulations' states that

'in order to satisfy contributors that teachers and masters properly qualified may be got, it is proper to inform them that Mr. Sheridan, whose ingenious and instructive lectures in this city first suggested the idea of establishing the society proposed, has not only engaged to find out teachers and masters, and to communicate to them his ideas concerning the proper method of performing their duty; but has

also offered to visit this place . . . and to contribute his advice and assistance towards carrying forward the operations of the Society in the most extensive and successful manner.'

One would have thought that a movement which had been heralded with such a flourish of trumpets and which had the powerful support of Lord Auchinleck (the father of James Boswell), Lord Kames, Sir Alexander Dick, William Robertson and Hugh Blair, would have at least rudely shaken the hold of the Scots vernacular. What it seems to have portended was the collapse of the Select Society. The precise circumstances leading up to this *dénouement* are obscure. All that is known is that a few weeks after the meeting at which the scheme was propounded, the managers intimated in the newspapers that they had engaged Mr. Leigh, 'a person well qualified to teach the pronunciation of the English tongue with propriety and grace, and that they had fixed the prices and conditions of his attendance upon gentlemen.'

Did the Select Society, which contained so formidable a list of personages of high distinction—did this grandiose Society die in a valiant attempt to teach Scotsmen how to write and pronounce the English tongue correctly? We cannot tell. Yet it is a significant fact that the demise of the Select Society synchronised with the labours of the 'ingenious Mr. Sheridan' to bring Scotsmen to a true knowledge of English, so that their intercourse with those who dwelt south of the Tweed might not be rendered awkward through lack of intelligibility. If there be substance in our conjecture, could the Select Society have died in a nobler cause?

N'GWENYA.

THE SAGA OF A CROCODILE.

BY DENIS TOWNLEY.

It was rather like a duck's egg, but larger and more oval; perhaps three and a half inches long by two inches wide; and it stood out, snow-white, against the wet sand by the reed clump. Overhead, old Milvus, the Yellow-billed Kite, that cunning pilferer of unconsidered trifles, watched it longingly as he poised, wings scarcely aquiver, resting on the river breeze.

He had not much hope, old Milvus, but he had any amount of time, and an infinity of patience. Also he was interested. A thief himself—and one of no mean order—he had to admit that here was a master of the craft, and he was always ready to learn.

They had been there since dawn. Gondo, the five-foot Monitor Lizard, lay spreadeagled on the big grey rock at the tail of the eddy. Timsa, of course, was in her usual place: on the patch of damp, black soil, flung up and left by the February floods, at the lower end of the pool.

For a crocodile Timsa was not very large. She was about nine feet long and four feet in girth; well grown, considering her age, for she was merely a young matron of eighty. She had been there for twelve weeks, hardly ever leaving that uneasy couch, and the soil was packed hard over an area five yards in diameter, scored and ribbed with countless impressions of its thousand-pound load.

To Milvus, passing on his own affairs up and down river, she was a familiar sight. Always at the same spot, but

constantly changing her position as the pitiless tropic sun blazed its path across the empty sky. Her head lay in the shadow of the reed clump, and she moved as the shadow moved, courting that scanty shade.

Although old Milvus had not actually seen the eggs until to-day, he had known all about them. Somewhere in that patch of flattened soil, about ten inches underground, would lie from fifty to seventy large white spheres, carefully packed into their two-foot-diameter hole. He had known that they were due to hatch out almost any day now ; therefore, when, that morning, he saw that Timsa was not in her usual place but down in the shallows under the bank, he had drifted quietly across to have a closer look. If the crocodile—hearing the chirping of her offspring—had scraped away the protecting soil above the nest, it might be possible to snatch an egg before she saw him and returned. A crocodile's egg—or even a new-born crocodile—would be very acceptable ; there were two balls of brown fluff, yellow beaks constantly agape for food, in the Baobab tree just above the Chipolila Falls.

Cunning old rogue that he was, Milvus did not stoop sheer to his quarry. He floated gently across to the other side of the pool and gently back, low to the ground and casting no telltale shadow on the sand.

Lower . . . lower . . . lower. A long, gliding swoop and he skimmed the reed clump and arrived over the nest—to find that he had been forestalled ! In the very centre of the clearing was a rough crater of loose sand. Outside it a dozen broken shells. On the lip stood Gondo, his snake-like head and wrinkled neck lowered over the excavation, in the act of taking an egg, while his wife was not ten yards away, scurrying riverwards with yet another in her mouth.

So far as Milvus was concerned there seemed to be no

'Honour amongst thieves.' Baffled in his own dark designs, he took good care that Gondo should not profit in his stead. Up into the air he shot, with a strident shriek that echoed from the cliff-face by the waterfall, and was re-echoed in its turn by a brace of Spur-winged Plovers which were feeding there.

Before the last echo had died Timsa was out of the pool ; a foaming bow-wave cresting from her snout as she came. For so apparently clumsy a reptile, she moved with incredible speed. She left the water in a cloud of spray, and was up the steep bank in a flash : all her length well off the ground.

On the top of the bank they met, almost face to face. Gondo's wife—the egg still in her mouth—was making, full speed, for the water. She dropped the egg and shot past Timsa. She passed her head . . . her body . . . two-thirds of her tail . . . and then it happened. That tail swung back and sideways, lashed forward in a glittering arc, and Gondo's wife—was Gondo's wife no more.

There was a sullen splash in the pool, and for some time afterwards old Milvus, circling above it, could see a shapeless brown object which sank slowly from sight, accompanied by an attendant cloud of small fish. Timsa, growling and hissing like a huge cat, scratched the soil back over such eggs as remained, and settled down once more. The plovers ceased their clamour, and the last ripples died in the shade of the farther bank.

The egg lay where it had fallen ; looking, to Milvus, through the heat blanket above it, like a white pebble in a swiftly running stream.

Metaphorically, the old kite licked his lips, but having seen Timsa in action he was not going to take any chances. Unhurriedly he worked his way upwards in steep spirals, until at last he was a mere speck in the surrounding blue.

There he struck a slant of wind and drifted away into the inland haze.

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The peace of high-noon lay over Chipolila. Even the doves had ceased their somnolent cooing and were drowsing in the scanty shade. The only sound was the ceaseless undertone of the great Sabi river ; the gurgling and chuckling of the broken water in the rapids, and the solemn thunder of the falls, half a mile up-stream.

Timsa lay as motionless as a stone. Four or five feet behind her tail lay the egg.

A big black warrior ant, nearly two inches long, saw it lying near his path ; came up to it ; examined it carefully—and left in rather a hurry. The next visitor was a dragon-fly. He cut a path of flaming iridescent blue above it ; lit, and settled himself. Two seconds later he shot vertically into the air and vanished, while the shell cracked at the spot where he had rested.

Then things began to happen. A flake of shell dropped to the ground. Out shot a shiny black snout, followed by a pair of wicked green eyes—absurdly large for the tiny head. N'gwenya took his first look at the world.

He did not waste time. One brief survey of the small area vouchsafed him by his egg-shell collar, and he got down to business. His ordinary teeth were somewhat inadequate for tackling the tough, leathery membrane which imprisoned him, but at the tip of his snout was a single gleaming fang—much larger than its fellows—provided by Nature for this very purpose. He made good use of it !

A dozen bites—accompanied by hissing swear-words which no crocodile of his tender age should have known—and he was free. A convulsive wriggle or two and he emerged in his entirety ; a little ill-proportioned, but otherwise a perfect

replica, in miniature, of Timsa herself ; nine inches long to his mother's nine feet.

By rights N'gwenya should have been bigger, but he was really quite as large as could be expected, seeing that he had hatched out a full ten days before his time, and under the most adverse conditions. Out of his egg in safety, he was ready to face the thousand-and-one dangers which beset the path of a small crocodile during the first twenty years of his life.

The baby crocodile had not lain there five minutes before he was called upon to face the first of those 'thousand-and-one.' It wasn't really a danger at all, but N'gwenya could not know that. Merely old Katawa, the quaint Hammer-headed Stork—most inoffensive frog-eater that ever flapped a clumsy course over the Sabi. All the same, he cast a shadow ; and a shadow spelled danger ! One flick of his minute tail, and the crocodile spun round to face the pool. Away he scuttled, reached the lip of the sand bank, glissaded down it and dived from sight into the muddy water.

But why didn't he run to his mother for protection ? There is a passage in the work of a very early naturalist, who studied these reptiles in the seventeenth century, which reads : 'And if he findeth his offspring by the river brim he slayeth him, and he weepeth over him, and then he doth swallow him.' Like many another naturalist since his time, he may have drawn a little upon his imagination, but there is some truth in his statement, nevertheless. No small crocodile which wants to live long takes any chances with his mother—much less with his elder brothers and sisters, his uncles and aunts !

N'gwenya was in the Chipolila Pool ; safely launched on his long life of adventure and wanderings that cover one hundred and thirty-five years.

A year—or even a month—is a long time, when measured by human standards ; but what was a year to N'gwenya ? By the end of six months he would be ready for his first meal—probably nothing more substantial than a dragon-fly, or fresh-water shrimp. By the end of a year he would be just one inch longer than on the day he left the egg.

The estimated life of a crocodile is in the neighbourhood of one hundred and fifty years. All that time he is growing ; during the first thirty or forty years at the rate of about one inch per year, and afterwards slightly more rapidly. During his later years he increases in girth rather than length.

One hundred and thirty years is a long period : too long to relate N'gwenya's history in detail, so it will be necessary to cover whole decades within a page. A pity, since a crocodile's life—especially the first thirty years or so of his babyhood—is one long epic of peril and adventure. And that is not surprising when you think that thousands upon thousands of crocodile's eggs are hatched yearly on the banks of the Sabi, and yet the adults in a five-mile stretch of the river can be numbered on the fingers of your hands.

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Chipolila Pool in bright moonlight. A night in late November, just fifteen months since this story began, the falls were still there ; that endless, thundering cataract foaming down on its path to the sea. But where, before, the water leaped over in a curtain of clearest crystal, even in the moonlight it was dark and discoloured. It was the spring spate, born of the first rains in the high veld.

Overhead were the jutting branches of a giant Baobab tree, and, against the sky, three indistinct shapes. It was old Milvus and his wife, roosting beside their nest, rebuilt every year in that same crotch, and just relieved of its second set of nestlings in the last two seasons.

Every now and again, flung above the glittering sea of foam and broken water at the foot of the fall, rose a brighter flash. The still, black reach down-stream was being broken in a hundred places into silver rings, which widened into concentric silver circles ; constantly dying and as constantly reborn. The fish, running up-stream in the fresh, had been stopped by the barrier of the falls and were congregated here in their thousands, and with them had come the fishers.

Occasionally a small black lump was visible for a few seconds, floating in the still water. It might have been a stick of driftwood, the back of a basking fish, or the head of Ncaca, the big fresh-water turtle, but more often it was one of the fishers—just the two-inch-diameter bulge of his protruding nostrils, which allow a crocodile to breathe without revealing more than that tiny portion of his anatomy.

A silver cascade of leaping fish in the shallows ; a surging triangular wave cuts in towards them ; an upheaval like that of a charge of dynamite, and the spray was flung up in a gigantic fan, spattering the sand for thirty feet inland.

On a shelf below, just lapped by the back-wash of the fall, was N'gwenya like a stranded stick ; very little different from when we saw him last, although he is possibly somewhat better proportioned and his egg-tooth is missing ; discarded now that it had fulfilled its purpose.

His rôle here was purely that of a spectator, for it is ten years before he will be able to join in the spring fishing. Even if he had been safe from his own kind, his life in that water would have been a matter of minutes, for Gondo was there, with a dozen friends and relations ; so was Katumbu, the great black otter. And so were the fish : Tiger Fish, ferocious and cunning as their namesake, with teeth like a steel gin ; eighty-pound Vundu, slow and sluggish, but

capable of swallowing a crocodile of N'gwenya's size at a single gulp.

In the pool the game went on, while ever above the roar of the falling water rose the deep, coughing bellows of the crocodiles, with an occasional piercing whistle from Katumbu.

The dreaming moon sank slowly behind the gorge, while black cliff shadows crept across the pool. Now half N'gwenya's length was bathed in moonlight while the other half had vanished in the all-engulfing shadow. At one moment his head only could be seen. At another he was swallowed utterly. The noises in the pool died down. Against the eastern cliffs the sky paled almost imperceptibly, while away behind the hills echoed the wild, mad laughter of Fisi, the hyæna, returning to his lair—answered, from higher up the river, by the shrill, whistling brays of a herd of zebra at their drinking-place.

Overhead the stars dimmed and the whole horizon was one vivid crimson glow. Old Milvus, flirting his tail and puffing out all his dew-drenched feathers, looked like an old woman in a tattered brown cloak. The fish still rose, but otherwise there were no signs of life in the pool.

N'gwenya's ledge below the Baobab was bare.

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Fifty years passed.

The falls were the same as ever, playing their ceaseless tune under a brassy August sky, but where the river used to purl and chuckle over the rocky shallows, close to the site of Timsa's nest, there was a dazzling stretch of white sand—more than a mile across. On either side of this huge sand island flowed the river in two deep and sluggish channels, to meet again in a new stretch of rapids, four miles below.

At the head of the island, ranged with almost mathematical exactitude side by side on the sand, lay five small crocodiles.

They were all about four feet long, and all exactly alike in build. The only one amongst them which was recognisable from his fellows was N'gwenya, for he lacked the last six segments of his high-finned tail.

He lost that tail-tip when he was just three years old ; and he lost it through a piece of folly which nearly cost him his life. He had been lying along a branch which jutted out over the deep water, when a most succulent-looking mouse had swum past under his very nose. He dived without a second thought, and had nearly reached his prize when he realised that there was another hunter after the same prey. A huge Tiger Fish loomed up—not ten feet away, and darting down-stream like an arrow. N'gwenya left the mouse and made for the bank as fast as his lashing tail could drive him. The fish—disregarding the mouse—tore after him.

A crocodile—even a small one—can move tremendously fast in the water ; but not so fast as N'chene. In spite of his start N'gwenya was being overhauled rapidly. He reached the shore before his pursuer, but it took some time to scramble to safety and his tail still hung over the bank when the fish arrived. N'chene's jaws came together with a metallic snap.

Up the bank scuttled N'gwenya, swearing horribly—a sore, but wiser crocodile : and dived into the shelter of the reeds, while N'chene sheered away up-stream in a wide curve, engulfing the luckless mouse as he went.

On that day N'gwenya had learned wisdom, and though he had seen hundreds of his companions meet their deaths from various causes—some eaten by their larger brethren ; others falling prey to the great grey herons, and to Kapungu, the Fish Eagle—he survived from year to year.

Even during the short fifty-one years of his life N'gwenya had seen many changes. He had watched the children of Chipolila village, which drew its water from the pool, grow

from tiny babies, strapped to their mothers' backs, into scampering youngsters, splashing in the shallows ; into young men, promoted from the toy bows and spears of their childhood to the real weapons of the chase ; and finally into solemn, bearded elders of the village council.

The year before, too, he had seen that mighty flood—the talk of the river tribes for generations—which had changed the entire geography of the Sabi.

The river had been unusually low that season, but when the fresh arrived, which was not until January, the water rose six feet during the first day—and continued to rise.

On the heels of the spate came the rain : such a rain as the valley had never known. It was not a series of heavy thunder showers, with intervals of burning sunshine, which was the type of weather to be expected in January. Instead, the sky was gradually obscured by a sickly, yellow haze, fraught with scurrying, ragged clouds which thickened into one impenetrable steel-grey blanket, stretching from horizon to horizon. The rain fell sullenly and endlessly, day after day ; each day when the villagers came down to the pool they found the yellow, frothy waves lapping a few inches higher up the bank.

For a whole month that downpour never ceased. The crops, planted in low-lying vleis to get the full benefit of the meagre rainfall which the natives were accustomed to expect, had hardly sprouted before they were submerged by the standing water, while the game left the district and headed for the Chuhanja hills.

N'gwenya spent most of his time in the yeasty eddies under the high banks below the pool, for there the fish were sheltering and the hunting was good.

He was lying there in the dusk, one evening, after a particularly satisfying meal, listening to the endless pattering

of the rain on the foliage above him, when the deep organ-note of the pent-in river at the gorge swelled suddenly into a hollow thunder, accompanied by a hissing and crackling most eerie to hear. While N'gwenya gazed up-stream, suddenly, round the corner of the hill, appeared a great yellow wave, crested with foam and filling the river from bank to bank. Before the crocodile could gather his scattered wits he was caught, lifted, and flung high over the protecting bank.

His headlong career ended abruptly. With a jar which shook him from stem to stern he came down on some hard, ridged object, and there he clung while the water foamed on past him. It was one of the bush-pole platforms used by the natives for storing their grain.

As he clung there he saw Chipolila village kindle into a dozen points of torchlight, heard the frenzied shouting of the men, the screaming of women and the terrified bleating of goats. The flares wound slowly towards the hills like some huge luminous snake, and the clamour of their going faded with them. Then N'gwenya was washed loose from his hold by the still-rising flood and swept inland.

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Next morning the dawn broke grey and cheerless over a huge inland sea, fifteen miles across, studded with trees that still stood above the flood and broken by numerous islands, formed where little kopjes rose above the flats. Here and there a few hut roofs still showed above water, and the ant hills were unsubmerged.

Nearly every one of these small islands harboured survivors of the flood. The larger game had quitted the valley weeks before, but the smaller beasts remained, and such of these as had not been washed away and drowned by the first wave were marooned on every hillock which rose above the

water. Ant-bears, porcupines, honey-badgers, mongooses, wild cats, cane rats, squirrels and countless smaller animals ; they lay there terrified and shivering, all tribal differences forgotten for the moment. Later, when the pangs of hunger asserted themselves, there would be a different story.

For a week the face of the water was littered with corpses ; some—mere mangled, putrefying lumps of meat, these—which had been carried down the gorge on the crest of the flood ; others drowned since the water had spread out over the lower valley. Buck and swine, sheep and goats ; N'gwenya's people could take their pick.

Farther down-stream, where the river spread out over the flats, such high land as remained carried a human population, and the plight of these unfortunates was terrible. Such food as they had been able to bring away with them was soon exhausted. Many managed to construct crude rafts and reach the shore, and others were rescued by the few canoes that had not been washed away by the flood, but in some places there were whole villages which were stranded on barren, treeless islands, miles from the nearest land.

It was then that N'gwenya first acquired his taste for human flesh. The old people were the first to go. Many of them without even a kaross, they did not survive the cold and damp for more than a few days. When they died they were consigned to the flood, for there were no tools with which to dig graves, and they could not be allowed to lie. After them came the women and children, and then the men, one by one. Many of these last, rather than face death by exposure and slow starvation, took to the water in a final, desperate attempt to swim to safety ; but hardly one won through. Even among the river tribes, very few natives are strong swimmers.

These were a wild and savage people, and, even in normal

times, their code was that of the survival of the fittest. Suffice it to say that those islands witnessed scenes of the greatest courage and self-sacrifice . . . and others too frightful to mention.

At long last the flood receded. Gradually the people were able to creep back to their abandoned villages—now mere piles of sodden mud and grass—to face the lean months of starvation until the next year's crops should be ready to reap.

N'gwenya, with half a dozen of his fellows, worked back slowly towards the river, keeping to the fringe of the retreating water, until they arrived at the Makari Pan. Here they lingered, for they did not know that, although the level of this inland lake dropped but slowly, between its shores and the river stretched nearly ten miles of Mopane forest which, in a month or two, would be as dry as a desert.

From March, when the floods receded, to September, when he left the pan, N'gwenya learned the marsh life ; saw the fighting of the wild geese in the dawning ; watched the purple jacanas, balancing themselves delicately as they trod the lily pads, and the great grey herons and white-bellied storks as they stood—so many carven sentinels—over their fishing grounds and listened through the long, moonlit nights to the whistling of the wings of a thousand wild duck and the melancholy cry of the bitterns.

Food in the Makari was scarce ; only a few barbel and an occasional water bird. But N'gwenya had fed well during the flood, and a crocodile can starve for a month—or even two months—without discomfort. As their range became restricted they grew restless until, one bright night in early September, led by a huge fifteen-footer, they left the pool and headed, with the unerring instinct of the wild, for the river.

They travelled all that night, waddling in single file, with

frequent pauses for rest. They steered a course as true as by any compass, while the night beasts eyed them askance, and gave them a wide berth. At two o'clock in the morning they reached Chitza's village, and, making no attempt to circumvent it, headed straight between the huts and on towards the steep bank of the Sabi.

No man saw that strange procession, for natives sleep heavily, and there were no dogs to give them warning, but one or two of the sleepers were awakened a few minutes later by a succession of deep, sullen reports, like so many big guns, as the crocodiles dived into the river.

N'gwenya found himself in strange waters, so he headed up-stream, lying up by day and travelling by night. By the second night he had heard the sound of the falls, and by six o'clock the next morning he was in the home pool—a pool so changed as to be almost unrecognisable.

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Of the next phase of N'gwenya's history—the long years from the day he returned to the Chipolila Pool to the time when he left it and headed for the sea—it is possible only to give the barest outline.

The elders of Chipolila village died, one by one, and were carried to their burial caves in the surrounding hills, while the women wailed a wild requiem to their passing. The village, which was Chiruma's, became N'dare's, and then Rumpangwane's; and still N'gwenya was the constant watcher of the pool. Then, for five whole seasons, no human voice was heard, and the cliffs echoed the lion's roar and the barking of the baboons.

One day, from his sand bank, N'gwenya watched the Chipolila children splashing, as usual, in the shallows, while the women gossiped round the water calabashes. That night came a huge impi from the south—one of Tchaka's

regiments—destined to reap a red path far into the north ; to conquer, and settle, what is now known as Angoniland. The next morning N'gwenya watched them pass ; perhaps two thousand ringed and painted warriors, who marched down to the ford in orderly ranks, with a tread that shook the ground. By that afternoon they had gone, taking the Chipolila women with them, while where the village had stood rose a pall of grey smoke. A solitary vulture dropped in slow spirals out of the blue above it ; signal for a hundred others, each a good mile above the earth and keeping his ceaseless vigil over his own terrain, to converge to the feast.

Five years later the village was rebuilt, for the pool was bordered by good grazing, and was one of the best fishing-places on the river ; so again N'gwenya heard the laughter of children round the water and the pounding of grain stamps under the hill. For the next twenty years the valley was left in comparative peace, except for inter-tribal bickerings—small affairs between chief and chief, such as must always be occurring in any savage community.

N'gwenya was now one hundred years old—eleven feet of ribbed and corrugated armour-plate. He was one of the landmarks of the river, for not only was he easily recognised by his great bulk and shortened tail, but his exploits had earned him notoriety for miles around the district. The taste for human flesh, acquired during the flood of fifty years ago, had never left him. For many years it had been sustained by an occasional corpse, brought down by the spate, and by a few small babies, for when a woman of the village gave birth to twins, one or other of these luckless infants would be carried down to the pool at midnight by the local witch-doctor. There, with due ceremony, it was flung far out into the deep water.

In his eightieth year N'gwenya had graduated from man-

eater to man-killer. He had been lying near the ford when a belated hunter had arrived at the bank, and started to wade across the river in the dusk. He was not ten feet from the crocodile when he had stooped to drink, and as his scooping hand skimmed the surface N'gwenya rose to it, as a big fish rises to a fly. The unfortunate hunter, already half off his balance, had no chance. He had time to give one scream, which brought the Chipolila people crowding to their hut doors, and then he vanished in a wild flurry of water. His bow floated away down-stream, and his heavy-bladed spear—on which he had been leaning as he drank—was left with its blade embedded in the sand and its shaft standing upright in the water ; mute evidence of his end. He was the first of many. N'gwenya knew no pity, and what he gripped he held. This was merely one more type of food ; more appetising than others, and easier to kill.

As a rule natives are very careful in their dealings with crocodiles, and take all possible precautions when crossing rivers, drinking at strange pools, or fishing ; but there always comes a time when caution is forgotten—or ignored : a belated traveller—such as N'gwenya's first victim—trying to reach home before night, or, more often, a hunter who carries a proven charm against crocodiles and, with the pathetic faith of the native in talismans, presumes too far on his immunity.

One day, just after N'gwenya had taken his fifth human victim, a strange ulendo arrived in the Chipolila village. They were yellow men—half-caste Portuguese ivory hunters—and they carried the first guns that had ever been seen in the valley. That night the visitors sat long over the fires, holding forth to an admiring circle of villagers, and their leader, as an earnest of goodwill towards his hosts (and also because he

needed carriers), promised that the next morning should see the death of the big crocodile which was the terror of the ford.

At sunrise the crack shot of the party, accompanied by a guide and followed by the entire village, arrived at the bank of the pool. There was no difficulty in distinguishing his mark, for N'gwenya lay in full view on his usual sand bank, not fifty yards out into the stream. While the crowd watched in awe-struck silence the hunter placed a forked stick in the ground, rested in the crotch his six feet of brass-bound drain-pipe, took aim and pulled trigger.

The gun went off with a roar which nearly dislodged the loose shale on the cliffs, while a pall of black, evil-smelling smoke hid N'gwenya from sight. When it cleared nothing could be seen but a cloud of falling spray, and a huge wave spreading outward from the island whence he had vanished. For three days the villagers watched the pool, but no body rose to the surface and N'gwenya was not to be seen. By common consent it was decided that—badly wounded—he had crept into some underground cavern to die, and as month followed month without a sight of him he was gradually forgotten.

Actually he was very far from being dead, but he had received a nasty shock. The four-ounce iron bullet from the gun had struck him a glancing blow on the armoured neck plate just between the shoulders, cracking the plate but failing to penetrate. After his first dive he swam straight down the pool, keeping under water as long as his lungs would allow—about twelve minutes. That first dive brought him beyond the ford, and he forged on without pausing, sometimes above water and sometimes below, for the whole of that day and well into the night. At midnight he climbed out on a reedy island to rest, for his wound

attracted the small fish, and made it impossible for him to remain in the water.

The next morning he was on his way again, and for ten days he continued to work down-stream. The country changed from the familiar M'lala palm and sand banks to open flats, where the river ran sluggishly under high banks ; then into dense forest, where the water lapped among the giant tree-roots and flying foxes flapped heavily overhead in the twilight. By the tenth day the river had widened to nearly five miles across, and N'gwenya could hear a noise like his own falls at Chipolila when the night wind used to sweep down the gorge, gust after gust ; a constant, surging roar.

It was the sea.

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The Sabi delta was a good place, from the point of view of a crocodile, but it was more suited to a fish-eater than one of N'gwenya's size and bulk. When a crocodile passes the ten-foot mark he needs more than a fish diet to keep him filled. Here the animal life was confined to a few bush buck, and an infinite variety of monkeys and smaller beasts. Sometimes N'gwenya travelled out as far as the surf line, but he was at a disadvantage there, and knew it ; a crocodile's nostrils are not constituted for breathing in rough water, and at the edge of the surf roamed those wolves of the sea, the great white sharks.

Two seasons later he headed up-stream once more, and after fifty miles of leisurely travel he came upon a veritable crocodile's paradise. It was a long stretch of sluggish stream, with high, steep banks where the animals, when they wished to drink, were confined to a few narrow dongas which cut the river at right angles : each of these inlets had its small, sandy beach, fringed with high reeds. Human beings there

were none, for the country was low-lying and unhealthy, but game abounded, and N'gwenya seldom went hungry.

From greenish brown the crocodile's hide turned darker and darker until he was coal black, for there was no scouring action in this dead water. By his hundred and thirtieth year he was exactly fourteen feet long, and over eight feet in girth; his hide crested and gnarled like some enormous tree. He could catch a full-grown buffalo bull by the nose and drag him under water in less than a minute. When he took his prey from the bank, with a headlong rush from behind and a sweeping stroke of the tail, after the manner of his kind, even a thousand-pound eland would be flung far out in the stream—usually with two broken legs.

But there came a time when N'gwenya began to feel his age. No longer was he certain of a kill when he hunted from the bank, and even in the water he sometimes missed his grip. His sixth—and last—set of teeth had been completed ten years ago and when, as occasionally happened when dismembering one of his larger victims, a tooth was torn from its socket, no new one pushed forth in its place.

With old age came a great yearning for the valley he had left full thirty years ago: for the song of Chipolila, and the pool where he had first seen the light. One night in early June found him heading up-stream again, while the dim bank shadows drew slowly astern. Only the great bay fishing-owls saw him leave; they and a solitary dog otter which sat on a stranded tree-trunk in the centre of the river and whistled—loud and shrill—in his wake.

Three weeks later—for he had grown stiff and slow in the last few years, and was breasting a strong current—he was home. A new crocodile, a stranger, was lord of Chipolila Pool; but N'gwenya was not too old to fight. Before the dawn of the first day he was left in undisputed possession.

The pool was little changed since he had left it. Chipolila village still nestled in the hollow above the ford and the people—a new generation—had grown careless after years of immunity when crossing the river. They soon learned caution; but not before two members of the community had gone the way of so many before them.

For that last spell of life vouchsafed him, N'gwenya was happier than he had ever been. He spent long, dreamy days, lulled by the old, familiar song of the falls; lay in his old hunting-places through nights of shimmering star-shine, while he listened to the barking of the baboons in their sleeping caves and the guttural love songs of the bellowing hippopotami. His former mate of thirty years ago had remained faithful to the pool, and her he rejoined. That July she scraped her nest-hole in the reeds below the fall, and by the end of the month she had settled down to the long and trying work of incubation.

But the day of N'gwenya's reckoning was upon him. One breathless, torrid afternoon in October he was lying under the cliff, where he was concealed from view by the overhang and at the same time enjoyed a cooling shower-bath from the drifting spray of the fall. Nearly opposite him, and in full view, lay his wife, her snout close to the nest and her tail nearly overhanging the water.

N'gwenya's first warning of danger was a small flake of granite, which came rattling down the cliff-face, flew clear and splashed into the pool by his side: next came a shower of smaller rubbish; then two figures turned the corner of the rocks and climbed cautiously down towards him. The one was a native, the other a strange white-faced human, carrying what he knew by experience to be a gun. Neither of them noticed N'gwenya, right under their feet, for their attention was concentrated on his wife where she lay in full

view on the farther bank. When they were about ten feet above him he slipped off the ledge and submerged with hardly a ripple. The white man sat on a convenient ledge and took slow and careful aim.

Came a vicious, whip-like crack, the dull thud of a striking bullet, and then the thunder of conflicting echoes round the cliff. The crocodile was hit fairly behind the shoulder with a solid bullet, which raked heart and lungs before emerging from her mouth; yet, even so, she did not die at once. She started at the impact; then slowly she raised her head, until her nose pointed upwards at an angle of forty-five degrees. She opened her mouth in what seemed to be a colossal yawn . . . Then the great jaws came together with a clash that rang round the cliffs and, spinning round, she leaped clear over the bank into the pool and sank like a stone.

All that night N'gwenya bellowed and barked below the ford, but he did not visit the head of the pool until morning. Just at sunrise he climbed slowly out at the nest-site. As might have been expected, a monitor lizard was hard at work there, but N'gwenya did not seem to notice—or to care. The monitor fled for its life, and the crocodile lumbered slowly forward until he stood beside the ravaged nest. There he sank down and lay motionless.

The sun rose in all its glory; cleared the cliff and started to burn its way into the sand. Of the twenty or so eggs which remained in the nest-hole three had chipped, and out of one protruded the head of a baby crocodile. As the little reptile wormed himself clear of the shell, not two feet from the head of his sire, the huge crocodile's eyes, wide and unblinking, gazed through and over him. N'gwenya's thoughts were far away; maybe covering this, the tale of his years—or perhaps he was sleeping, for he lay as motionless as death.

Suddenly he moved—no more than the faintest tremor. In that instant came a sharp thud, as if some wind-whipped branch had lashed his side : an appreciable interval, and then the crash of a rifle from the farther cliff.

That one tremor, and he lay exactly as before, while behind one unblinking eye oozed a single spot of blood.

Then the eyelid drooped—and closed.

As motionless as . . . death.

Five minutes later came a crunching of booted feet in the sand. The baby crocodile was suddenly galvanised into active life and dived into the shelter of the reeds.

. . . 'Gad ! he is a monster ! I wonder when he lost the end of that tail.'

The tall white man turned to his gun-bearer.

'Maraca ; chaulane madzira izo. Mudzela pa mudzi, muuza antu ache kuti aaleka ku chita manta. Iye Chingwenya, ndipo mfazi ache, ana ache, afa onse.'

('Maraca ; destroy these eggs, and then go and tell the people of the village that they need fear no more. The big crocodile, his wife and his children, are all dead.')

Under the bank a single withy bent slowly towards the water as the tiny form of the baby crocodile crawled out along it.

Chichindwe, S. Rhodesia.

BY THE WAY.

IN the height of the summer many were afflicted as with a sense of personal sorrow at learning that 'Mudie's' was no more : for a number of generations it had been almost a household word to book-lovers and the hold that its staff had upon the affection of clients has now been proved. On hearing the news, conscious that a sudden cessation of such a kind must inevitably inflict great hardship upon men and women who had served them with courtesy and efficiency for years, several subscribers put their heads together, and instituted 'Mudie's Staff Fund' and set up a small organisation to help the ex-staff to find fresh employment and, where that was impossible, to assist in other ways the elderly unemployed to live. So generous was the response that the Committee now feel that, though more will be welcome, they should cease to press for further contributions : it has been a very encouraging example of what can be done by a handful of friends in the way of helping others in an undeserved crisis, and the felicitations of well-wishers to 'Mudie's' and its ex-staff are due to this small band, who with great altruism worked hard in London throughout the aridity of August at the task. I can say that with real conviction as they invited me to be their Chairman, a post which, with such a willing, efficient band of honorary organisers, entailed but very little time and yet enabled me to judge of the merit and success of the endeavour. In a sad little piece of book-history, this must always remain a particularly gratifying page, a genuine little fragment of disinterested and capable philanthropy.

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So nothing ever began in Palestine : we have it this

autumn on the authority of Mr. H. G. Wells. It will be remembered that it was he who relegated the influence of Greece to a footnote. We live and learn—after all the President of the Educational Section of the British Association must know!

* * *

An autobiography which is more than the record of one life, which is, however unintentionally, an illuminating explanation of that attitude of mind amongst its leaders (as well as amongst many of the rank and file) that has led to the present disintegration of the Labour Party and has throughout its history prevented it from being the great moral and reforming power it will one day, no doubt, become is to be found in the first volume of Mr. J. R. Clynes's *Memoirs* (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d. n.). It is on the whole a capably constructed book and owes, obviously, not a little to Mr. F. S. Stuart, whose help in compiling the material the author acknowledges: it has at any rate much more meat in it than has been evident in some other recent political autobiographies, and it deals conscientiously and in considerable detail with Mr. Clynes's career from his birth in 1869 until the start of the first Labour Government in 1924. His rise from mill-hand to Cabinet Minister is, of course, a notable one and such rises are always in the nature of interesting adventures, but they are, happily, hardly 'phenomenal' (the publisher's description) and any competent novelist soon learns to avoid that 'little did I think' trap into which Mr. Clynes so frequently falls. But there are—even apart from the fundamental weakness—some odd mistakes. For example, it was not in the election of 1910 but as far back as 1878 that people exuberantly sang the celebrated 'by Jingo!' doggerel—rather a difference, though any stick, as other pages prove, will do to beat a political

opponent. Again, Lord Mottistone is described as having been 'Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Forces in France'—an error which ought never to have been made; and, even if he had been, he could hardly have uttered a statement so undemonstrably untrue as that attributed to him on page 231.

It is when we come to the War, which occupies the greater part of the book, that the confusion of vision and thought is most markedly shown. First of all, we have repeated *in extenso* the old, old asseverations (no proof being offered) that the War was made by the armament firms and that national policy is dictated by militarists; then, in spite of all the documentary evidence since given to the world, Grey is represented as having worked subterraneously for war and committed the country to it without authority either from his colleagues or Parliament—that he is also represented after his great speech of August 4, 1914, as 'a shrunken figure,' muttering broken-heartedly 'I hate war!' is one of the many inconsistencies upon which Mr. Clynes—perhaps wisely—attempts no comment. Then we come to the War itself: there is not one word of condemnation or even criticism of the enemy; they may march through Belgium, kill civilians (stories of atrocities all manufactured by us, of course), sink food ships and so forth—that is all passed over without censure of any kind: but our blockade is 'inhuman,' our policy is militarist, our refusal to accept defeat lamentable and our actions reprehensible from first to last. One would imagine Mr. Clynes to have been a vehement conscientious objector, probably interned, at any rate from time to time under arrest. Not at all: Mr. Clynes played a very prominent part in defeating the enemy's submarine campaign by his work at the Ministry of Food, first under Lord Rhondda, and then as Food Controller himself, he was a colleague of

the politicians he so trenchantly denounces, and a pointed illustration of his confusion of thought is to be found in the midst of the pages of declamation against our participation in the War and against our militarism where Mr. Clynes inserts a photograph of himself standing with natural pride beside his officer son and a private with the V.C. It is this habit, doubtless entirely unconscious, of trying to have the best of both worlds which explains how it is that all through this present troubled year the Labour Party has at one and the same time inveighed against rearmament and called vehemently for a policy of intervention in Abyssinia, Spain and elsewhere, which could not be effective without rearmament. In spite, however, of all its mistakes, misconceptions and inconsistencies, the book is the record of a stout-hearted, pacific and lovable man, and will be read—especially in its early chapters—with sympathetic interest. The promised second volume will deal with events since 1924 : it is to be hoped that the announcement that it will tell the story of the crisis of 1931 'for the first time' will disappear : that has already been told, and from the inside, by several autobiographers, but the part played in it by Mr. Clynes, always the moderator in act however denunciatory in words, will be read in its due time with attention. But need the publishers take sides politically and dub those who differ from their author 'traitors' ? That seems undesirable from every point of view and most of all from the author's.

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People in general who write their autobiographies fall into two main classes, those who are so deeply interested in themselves that they want to tell others all about the events of their lives, and those who have been a part of great happenings and feel it desirable to explain the part they played in them. Sometimes an autobiographist belongs to both

classes, but normally to one or other. Mr. Clynes belongs to the second, Mr. S. P. B. Mais to the first ; the interest of the latter's autobiography, incorrectly entitled *All the Days of My Life* (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d. n.), lies in the fact that he possesses to a very unusual degree an immense interest in his own doings. At first, when one begins to read, this is irritating ; gradually it becomes persuasive until finally the reader is unconsciously seeing Mr. Mais, talking to him, and travelling with him, with Mr. Mais's own eyes and consequently without dissatisfaction and with a good deal of pleasure. It is, nevertheless, difficult to remember any other book in which the writer, under cover of a series of imaginary interviews, disinters and quotes all the fulsome things ever said to or written about him. But Mr. Mais is excessively disingenuous : he tells the reader some of the silliest things he ever said or did (and some really are silly) and with equal gusto. Gusto, after all, is a notable quality, and that Mr. Mais has always possessed ; and it is—presumably—not his fault that his book is labelled 'S. P. B. Mais's Great Autobiography.' It does not deserve the adjective 'great,' but it is the refreshing and vivacious account of a busy journalist and lecturer who always immensely enjoys himself and who likes—as well as dislikes—a great many things and people, and it has not a little interest as a picture of scenes and personalities of this hurrying age.

★ ★ ★

A book has just been issued which will not only appeal to all lovers of literature, but have a special interest to readers of CORNHILL. It will be remembered that in October, 1935, and February, 1936, Marie Adami published in these columns two articles entitled 'Fanny Keats and her Letters.' In these the world was told for the first time what manner of sister Fanny had been to her great brother and the debt that

is for ever owed by her. Mrs. Adami has now completed her researches and published *Fanny Keats* (John Murray, 10s. 6d. n.). Fanny from childhood to old age remained devoted to her brother ; solely owing to this devotion letters which are the heritage of the world were preserved and are now in the possession of the nation. It is a wonderful, a new, and a most moving tale, and the strange secrecy which has covered much of it for so long is now removed in every detail. Here, for the first time and finally—for there can never be anything more to be added—is the story, brought right down to the present day, to the personal knowledge of Fanny's grandchildren resident in Spain and preserving still the precious relics of the poet that have not yet been given to the nation, those relics which throughout her life meant so much to Fanny : over the whole story—if I may for once quote a line of my own—abides

‘ *The lasting radiance of a sister's love.*’

* * *

Another book I can confidently recommend is *Let My People Go !* by R. F. Martyn and W. F. Synge (John Murray, 7s. 6d. n.). Biographical novels are popular—one on Thomas and Jane Carlyle will, incidentally, be starting in the January issue of CORNHILL—but they are seldom successful when dealing with a remote period of history. In this the authors have set themselves the task of telling the life of Moses from birth up to the successful accomplishment of the Exodus and explaining rationally the vexed question of the plagues of Egypt. The result justifies their boldness : it is a story which begins slowly and becomes increasingly dramatic, and the fictional account of the passage through the waters of Lake Bardawil makes a suitable climax to a story which is not only a fine novel but an exceedingly interesting

attempt to explain how the plagues came and how the people of Israel succeeded in making good their escape. A notable, unusual tale.

* * *

And finally, two very pleasant little books from Methuen which also lie before me : the first is the successor to Daniele Varè's charming *The Maker of Heavenly Trousers*, the new collection bearing the equally attractive title of *The Gate of Happy Sparrows* (7s. 6d. n.). Here the reader of the first book meets again Kuniang and her 'King Cophetua' and the same delicate pen tells fresh stories 'of a China that is passing away'—and now more rapidly than ever—and 'ghosts of old Peking.' A delightful little book both to read and to handle. And with it is issued yet another collection of essays from the one and only E. V. Lucas, the Elia of our time, entitled *All of a Piece* (6s. n.)—not so inappropriate a title, when one comes to think of it, for the whole output of this writer, always so genial, so agreeably informative and, let it be added, so skilled in the presentation even of trifles. Readers of CORNHILL will welcome here again both 'The Queen Diana' and 'George du Maurier at Thirty Three'; but there is much else over which to browse with the quiet enjoyment and appreciation which is the reward due and paid to that most rare kind of writer, the good essayist.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 169.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page v, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach the Editor by 27th November.

'In the first ——— of night'

1. 'Still for all ——— of hers,
One of Eve's family——'
2. 'Bedropt with roses waxen-white,
—— satisfied with dew and light,'
3. 'He has reft Mersar his ——
That did in luv^e so lively write,
So short, so quick, of sentence hie.'
4. '—— his altar, read and sing
In holy kirk, with mind degest,
Him honouring attour all thing'
5. '—— no further, pretty sweeting,'

Answer to Acrostic 167, September number: 'the labourer tills His wonted *glebe*.' (Tennyson: 'In Memoriam'). 1. ThinG (Shelley: 'To a Skylark'). 2. ILL (Emerson: 'Brahma'). 3. LiFE (Matthew Arnold: 'To Marguerite'). 4. LimB ('Dominus Illuminatio Mea,' anon.). 6. SmilE (Herrick: 'Cherry-Ripe').

The first correct answers opened were sent by W. Addis Miller, 4 Queen Street, Edinburgh, and Miss Lois Turner, 37 Chatsworth Street, Derby, who are invited to choose books, as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER 1937.

SYMBOLIC MASQUE.

BY WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

A SENTRY. *Halt, Life !*

Where is your passport ?

And how inscribed ?

CHORUS MYSTICUS. *The wave is stilled to a curl of steel*

That, promising to break,

Never breaks,

But is rhythmless, smooth, shining,

Lit by a slanting chord of moonlight

From a moon without motion.

Is there no nightingale ?

THE SENTRY. *Show me your passport.*

LIFE. *I need none ;*

I am free of the worlds.

THE SENTRY. *Without authority you cannot pass.*

LIFE. *I have no papers :*

Scar Earth as you will,

My grass will grow.

THE SENTRY. *You must have sponsors.*

LIFE. *I call them from Time's four quarters*

As though they were birds !—

They are here :

Sing, sponsors !

CHORUS OF EMANATIONS. *Waves on waves that break in
all things,*

We extend with rimming sweep ;

Man that proudly learns to call things

Name by name is but a leap

Past the lower tidal ranges

Of our welling from the norm ;

And, beyond æonian changes,

Where our wavelengths end is form.

CHORUS OF IMMANATIONS. *We are the inner essence
Of all flowing and crescence :*

The flamy sap of the orbs

And the power within the worm.

Oh, nothing shall come to a term

Till the vast Light reabsorbs

The broken rays, the refracted rays,

In its perfect prism, its quenchless blaze :

And we, in all the flowing and crescence,

Are the lingering reabsorbable essence !

COMBINED CHORUS. *As the pulse's twinning fitness*

To the beating of the heart,

We to Life bear sacred witness,

Primal flow and counterpart !

THE SENTRY. *If I let you pass,
Whither go you ?*

LIFE. *To Callipolis :*

There was no beauty in Chaos.

THE SENTRY. *The road to Callipolis
Is rocky and storm-hot,*

And sulphurous streams and saffron craters

Make wearier yet the foot ;

Robbers infest it,

The narrow defiles grin with the jests of ambush ;

And at every step flat, cactoid heads

Lift, waver and hiss :

Yet worse perils lie in haste.

Look back : the long way has wound from fire and slime ;

Look forward : it winds by spiral steeps

*To an enormous, piled skyline
 Of mountains, mountains, mountains ;
 But the sea-like, calm canopy over their peaks
 Echoes with clearest blown gold
 From the rose-red towers and jewelled pinnacles
 Of Callipolis therebeyond :
 See only that the great desire endures !*

CHORUS MYSTICUS. *We remember steel-white leagues,
 Ice-fields and glaciers,
 Green and rose in midnight sun and shadow,
 Leagues of intensities
 That wings, wings, wings
 Alone can traverse,
 Not Man on his natural foot,
 Nor on any sledge
 Contrived by his subtle wits,
 Nor in high-roaring aeroplanes
 Speed-poised in an incommensurance of azure,
 But only wings, wings, wings—
 And the etheric dew in the heart !*

THE SENTRY. *Who comes ?—
 Never wave your black banner here !*

DEATH. *Do not delay me :
 This is my marriage morning ;
 I am the groom, King Death !
 O sweet Life, my bride, my eternal bride,
 Had you forgotten our tryst ?*

LIFE. *No, I am here :
 Let the rites begin
 Before we journey to Callipolis
 Together, bridegroom.*

(Here follows)

THE EPITHALAMIUM OF LIFE AND DEATH

*Unbar the portals that divide
 Spirit from Spirit, West from East ;
 Fruition has been sanctified
 In witness of old Time the priest ;
 The springing sun and setting sun
 Are now in radiant dedication one.*

*Sprinkle new wine on the ancient doors,
 And light new lamps in the ancient rooms ;
 Scatter green shoots upon the floors,
 And fill the bowls with opening blooms ;
 This is a marriage none has made
 Since goodman Adam took in hand the spade.*

*With flaming torches here they come,
 And followed by a laughing rout ;
 Sing them high welcome to their home
 Before the torches are put out,
 And with a choric madrigal
 Close richly the triumphant festival :*

*' Life and Death are wedded now :
 Stars are set on brow and brow,
 Equal in their light ;
 And the Fates at last allow
 Truce to Day and Night.*

*' All antipathy is done ;
 Light and Darkness are at one
 In converged accord ;
 Midnight star and noonday sun
 Kiss, and break the sword.*

*' O divinest Beauty, turn
 In thy glass the sands that burn
 With a pauseless flow !
 Finite visions here discern
 What infinities show !'*

*Now close the doors upon their rest ;
 Unstumbling joy is theirs—and ours :
 For the whole universe is blest
 In such a nuptial bond of powers
 That, separate, are but transitory,
 But, hand in hand, compel eternal glory !*
 (Here ends the Epithalamium.)

CHORUS MYSTICUS. *Deep in the lampless haunt *of the
 worm,
 Porous and black,
 Is a secret singing.
 None knows from what avian throat
 It trills through the brittle gloom ;
 There are no boughs there, underground,
 No leafy thickets,
 No nests,
 Only soils and mould and the thick dark,
 And snaky roots that have no voice :
 Yet a bird sings !
 O green note, O green scale,
 The clayey catacombs quiver
 With the ascending notes
 That spiral out to the light,
 While a tender drumming,
 As of a million little clashing stones,
 Is susurrant to the dawn !*
 (Explosion. Darkness.)

A VOICE (epilogising). *There was a privy script unknown
Saving to Egypt's priests alone,
And in those mystic characters
They wrote the truth that never errs.*

*So in our masque a mystery lies,
Hidden from uninitiate eyes ;
Nevertheless, in every word
The privy pulse of truth is heard.*

*The privy pulse : and yet its beat
Is but a symbol, incomplete ;
The central heart is hidden still
In the enigmatic primal Will.*

*Then let no broken sanctities
Bring you, defeated, to your knees :
Lightning may split the mountain shrine,
The mountain's front, the horizon's line :*

*But not the quenchless dream that seeks
Beyond the glaciers and the peaks—
The liberty of selfhood, whence
Truth is the brimming consequence !*

(The Masque closes.)

WESTERN THOUGHT AND EASTERN CULTURE.

BY PAUL BRUNTON.

THE recent appointment of Sir S. Radhakrishnan to the Spalding Chair of Eastern Philosophy and Religions at Oxford stands in symbolic relation to our time as illustrating a trend which is creeping, for the most part silently and unnoticed, across the Western world. Out of the once-slumbering East, there comes this gifted man to teach its one-time conquerors the ancient lore and wisdom of his own people.

But now, like some compensatory adjustment by the forces of evolution, we are witnessing in the West the appearance of an at present thin, but slowly deepening current of interest in those very thoughts and ideas which the young men of India are at present doing their best to reject as inadequate to their needs and which constitute the faith and traditions of their forefathers. Like the psychoanalyst's contention that a repressed force will reappear in another form and through an outlet other than its normal one, it might almost seem as if the beliefs which are being repressed in the soul of the East are reappearing in the soul of the West.

If world trends mean anything at all, do they not mean that we are moving towards a realisation of the cultural oneness of mankind? The knowledge which is being spread by book and mouth, by wireless and cinema, is becoming a common knowledge in which all men may share. It is therefore in the fitness of things that a distinguished Indian like Sir S. Radhakrishnan should have been appointed as

the first Oriental to teach at England's most famous and most ancient seat of learning. Surely we have nothing to fear and nothing to lose by such frank interchange of ideas. The result can only be better understanding of those who happen to be born in the Eastern hemisphere of our globe, and especially of their best minds, an understanding which should inevitably lead to more mutual goodwill. And in a world full of strife and misunderstanding of which many of us are becoming increasingly aware, the growth of goodwill is no little thing.

Since that fateful day when the year 1600 made its last diurnal movement and witnessed the foundation of the first English Company to trade with the East under a royal charter received from the hands of Queen Elizabeth, British trade and British arms have been the heralds who have prepared the path for the spread of Western ideas in the East on a scale never envisaged by the Portuguese and French intruders whom they eventually displaced. For we not only gave India our manufactured goods and internal security, but also we gave her later the system of public instruction under which the whole of the younger school-going generation is to-day growing up.

For more than a century, ever since Macaulay drew up his famous Memorandum that was to become the basis of India's modern educational system, we have imposed upon the young men of that land an instruction along lines that are completely out of keeping with their traditional education. The result has been that nowadays we witness the spectacle of a hybrid generation here in India which has become Westernised from top to bottom, which lives, moves, acts, dresses and talks like most young Europeans, but which at heart struggles vainly to reconcile its own inherent traditions with an alien culture of which it has

assimilated as yet only the more outward and obvious forms. The students in the college halls of Calcutta, Bombay and a dozen other places laugh openly at the wisdom of their ancient sages, but are nevertheless uneasy inwardly.

India in her turn once gave us her silks and to-day she still gives us her tea, spices and precious stones. But she has also given us a thin trickle of literature and ideas, mainly at first through the enterprising efforts of inquisitive Western scholars, and with Sir S. Radhakrishnan's appointment, we may regard the value of these thoughts and this culture as having been definitely recognised and triumphantly established.

Since the gates of Oriental learning were first opened to those imperious Western students who followed in the tracks of Western armies, a part of its scriptures and literary gems has been eagerly collected and translated into European tongues. Yet those who roam the East to-day know that among the untouched lore lies many a book that is filled with rare psychological knowledge or imbued with profound spiritual inspiration.

Scholars like the French Duperron and Bernouf, who discovered and translated the Persian Bible Zend-Avesta and the Indian Upanishads in the eighteenth century; like Professor Max Müller, whose monumental series *Sacred Books of the East* first made accessible much of this varied lore; like Rhys Davids, who turned so many Buddhist Pali texts into English, and some others have tilled the religious field for us.

We of the West owe a debt to that much-maligned man, Warren Hastings, because he was the first European to initiate the study of Sanskrit and the Hindu sacred books. It was through his inspiration that Charles Wilkins published the first translation of the Hindus' most famous short classic,

the *Bhagavad Gita*. In 1786, when he was staying in Benares, he sat down to write a preface to the first English edition of this book, under whose spiritual influence he had fallen.

Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, *Oriental Poems* and other works have given us a hint of the beauty of Eastern poetry; Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and *In Black and White* picture the external life of an India that is passing, as Lafcadio Hearn's *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* and other works pictured the inner and external life of a Japan which is passing still more rapidly. Fielding Hall's 'Soul of a People' did the same for Burma. FitzGerald's translation of the priceless *Rubáiyát*, and the wise and witty verse of Sadi, rendered us aware of the luxuriant imagery of Persian poetry.

Japanese art came to the West in the middle of last century. The prints of Hokusai and Hiroshige, with their flat perspectives, profoundly influenced Whistler and gave birth to the Post-impressionist school of painting. Chinese art arrived even earlier and its productions of lacquered furniture and delicate porcelain became the rage as well as the model of eighteenth-century aristocratic France.

When I lived in Benares for a while, staying in a monastery in order to get a deeper insight into the mind of its inhabitants, I had many a discussion with those learned Brahmin pundits who, in Matthew Arnold's lines :

‘*In patient deep disdain,
Let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.*’

I could not help being somewhat amused by their ready assumption of religious and philosophic superiority over the Western thinkers. Apparently they knew next to nothing of the history of the inner life of Europe during past ages.

They did not know that there were analogues for many of their own doctrines and geniuses in the annals of European culture. Their world was circumscribed by their ancient texts, the *Vedas*.

A similar parochialism in our attitude towards the thoughts and faiths of Asia's highest thinkers and holiest men can no longer be justified in this day and age of world communion. We should therefore welcome whatever may emerge from Asiatic culture as being scientifically sound and philosophically true, even though the methods of modern investigation were not employed in arriving at these notions.

The inter-fusion of the peoples of both hemispheres in the domain of culture increases with the years. We have learned to live down our early contempt for races once thought to be but barbarians and we have learned to value and even to respect some of the spiritual and philosophical explorations of the brown and yellow races. Tennyson's dream of a world peopled by a humanity able to live like one great family in amity, tolerance and understanding is unhappily very far off, but this is not to say that world movements will not imperceptibly force us to its accomplishment. Alexander dreamt of this ultimate fate of the human race and attempted to mingle the cultures of many Eastern and Western races in the newly established city which was named after him. His efforts bore fruit for a time and flourished well, and if we cannot trace any continuance, it is because he was premature and undoubtedly ages before his time. These things when they do come about must come about naturally, not by any artificial forcing, but by that silent, slow and steady growth which is evidenced in the flower.

Norman Douglas once ironically declared that : 'Curry is India's greatest contribution to mankind.' One might

supplement his statement with the declaration that : ' Tea is the most meritorious of China's cargoes to the West.'

Indian culture is extremely wealthy in the domain of psychology, philosophy and religion, so wealthy that there are few doctrines which appeared out of original Western sources that have not already been anticipated and developed in India. Most of the advances in modern Western psychology are practically duplicating in their discoveries ideas which already exist, even if in a cruder and less scientific form, in India's ancient systems of religion and psychology. Quite a number of Oriental ideas have been adopted independently by our own thinkers in some similar or transformed shape, and expressed in a manner that suits our own time and outlook. This is no new process, for it has been going on through the centuries. Thus we have Henri Bergson's teaching of Creative Evolution closely paralleled by the Shakta teaching of the Tantrik school. Even the agnostics have their paradoxical parallel, too, in this most religious of all lands, for the founder of the Samkhya school asserted that ' the existence of a Supreme Creator is not proved.' Thousands of years before Charles Darwin was born, he hurled his philosophical tenets of Evolution against the doctrine of Creation which was upheld by the Brahmins of his day. His system received the following eulogy from the German Orientalist, Professor Richard Garbe : ' In Kapila's doctrine for the first time in the history of the world the complete independence and freedom of the human mind, its full confidence in its own powers are exhibited.' Nietzsche called the Greeks ' the best heirs and scholars of Asia ' and Professor Garbe has drawn attention to the profound influence of Hindu thought upon Greek philosophy in the period of its greatest splendour.

We have Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal rhythm in the

universe which echoes the theory of recurrent cycles expressed in India's major epic, the *Mahabharata*. Sir James Jeans suggests that the universe will ultimately dissolve into radiation and that a reverse process will follow. In short, he returns to the belief in cyclic creation which has been a fundamental doctrine of Hindu thought. Indeed, the idea that the universe is ultimately annihilated and then re-created anew after a period of rest possesses a history which extends from China to Persia also, and according to the most ancient Hindu philosophers, as expressed in their cosmological histories *The Puranas*, universes are born out of the womb of infinite space, exist for countless ages, are subject to decay and finally to dissolution. In this dissolved state which can be nothing other than a state of ray existence, in scientific terms, they exist latently. Then there is a re-creation, and the latent universe reappears and slowly evolves once again through long æons of time. Sir Arthur Eddington has advanced nearly the same view in his theory that the whole universe is steadily and irrevocably running down like a clock, a theory which drew from Dean Inge the pertinent question, 'Is it not reasonable to assume that whatever power wound up the clock once may probably be able to wind it up again ?'

However, the vital difference arises that whereas the ancients laid these doctrines down without detailed explanations, without giving their why and wherefore, we of the West are arriving at them through a step-by-step process. Our scientists are moving to these conclusions by a series of experiments and investigations which prove and demonstrate the correctness of their views. They endeavour to satisfy man's reasonable desire to understand the detailed workings of the universe, both hidden and apparent. If ancient and Eastern people were satisfied with mere assertion, we moderns

are not. Science itself owes its very existence to the growth of this modern outlook.

When the atom, once the solid foundation of materialistic doctrines, was found to be resolvable into congeries of whirling electrons and matter itself scientifically disappeared into energy, the intuitive perceptions of the Hindu seers in the Upanishads were vindicated ; no longer were their statements the mere childish babble as they were called by Macaulay, but simply they had said that a subtle energy pervaded the universe and all space, that matter was but a densification of this subtler energy, and that even behind this subtle energy there exists a still subtler essence which in itself was indestructible. *The Katho Upanishad* says : ' On this indestructible being the ether is verily woven and interwoven.' The *Bhagavad Gita* declares : ' Beings are unmanifest in origin, manifest in the mid-way stage, unmanifest again in dissolution. What ground is there for regrets ? '

The scientific view of matter has changed so much under pressure of the latest discoveries that one can perceive its increasing approximation to the Brahminic view that the apparent solidity of the universe is illusory. Our crude material substances have dissolved into mists of subtle atoms and subtler electrons and ions. In short, Shakespeare's intuitional statement that we and the world are made of ' such stuff as dreams are made of ' has been verified in the modern laboratory. When a respected scientist like J. B. S. Haldane asserts in one of his lectures that ' the physical world is not the real world, but only an ideal and quite insufficient representation of it. The real world is the spiritual world,' he is echoing, perhaps unconsciously, an assertion which was a typical concept of the Brahmin philosophy five thousand years ago, and which, with the traditional tenacity charac-

teristic of the East, has been handed down from generation to generation until it is still taught to-day as I heard it taught in the monastery of Benares. Nevertheless, again a vital difference of approach is manifest. The ancient Hindus took these statements in the nature of a revelation from on high, for they were made originally by their seers as a result of personal self-experience in the spiritual domain. Our Western scientists have no such experience, and if they are reaching similar conclusions, it is because they are working their way from the profoundest depths of this material world up to its farthest frontier where the ions elude them and vanish into pure spirit. It is not a question of which method of approach is superior to the other; it is rather a matter for self-congratulation that, on some of the most important topics, the wisest men of the ancient East and the modern West, starting from totally different premises, have arrived at precisely the same conclusions. It is on such a basis therefore that we may establish our hopes for an ultimate exchange in a freer and franker way between East and West of ideas, experiments and experiences which shall help mankind to establish the truth about this universe wherein it dwells.

There is much, of course, in Eastern ways which will never float across to the West. If the Orientals have a livelier appreciation of the reality of Eternity, and if their tropical climate emphasises this appreciation throughout their general attitude to life, we in the West are unlikely to entertain such views as deeply as they do. We may not, for instance, ever arrive at the stage of that wealthy money-lender whom I met several years ago in Lahore. He boasted to me, 'Whenever I have an appointment with a client for ten in the morning, I invariably turn up at the hour of two.' On my replying that this was surely bad

for business, he laughed and said, 'If I turned up at ten, then my client would turn up at two.'

The foundations of our belief in the reality of time have been upset somewhat by recent thinkers. Mr. J. W. Dunne has contributed not a little in his much-discussed book, *An Experiment with Time*. Not long ago, a London newspaper gave an example of how electrical shock could change the sense of time. One victim who watched a bicycle pass by at high speed after he had received a shock declared that he could see every spoke in the cycle wheel and that the latter barely seemed to him to be turning. Indian thinkers of antiquity have pictured the more or less parallel incident involving the prolongation of time until it lapses into Eternal. Indeed, they never tired of declaring that apart from man's own mind, time has no separate existence and that changes in the functioning of his mind could bring about such complete changes in his sense of time that he could veritably find himself imbued with the sense of eternity. This continuous flux of time which to us seems to go on for ever, to them is but a by-product of consciousness, an illusion produced by the succession of our thoughts. For them, there is only the Eternal Now, never-ending.

Bishop Berkeley's metaphysics runs very close to that of the Indian school of Vidnyanavadin Buddhas.

The school of behaviourism of which we have heard so much recently from America, the combative criticisms of atheism of which we heard so much during the last century possess their parallel and even forerunners in analogous schools of ancient Indian thought. There is, however, one vital difference between the Occidental and Oriental methods of approach, and that is, that whilst Western psychologists carry out most of their experiments upon other persons, the proponents and exponents of Indian systems are expected,

and do, carry out their experiments upon themselves first and foremost. This difference in such a subtle and intangible field as the human mind works out to the advantage of Indian psychology because, obviously, no amount of communication to another person can reproduce with perfect exactness mental states and ranges of awareness.

The East indeed has cradled every type of creed. There is a faith for the illiterate, credulous and superstitious boor and a faith for the cultured, thoughtful philosopher.

Superstition is, of course, widespread and fantastic in most parts of the East, but its extent is noticeably decreasing. Most Asiatic peasants still look upon life much as most European peasants did in our own medieval period. They still see the punishing hand of God in a pestilence whose cause we see to be dirty surroundings ; they still spend much time and energy and even money to placate the unheeding deities of Rain where we would spend our time and energy in creating a system of irrigation canals. Even after making all allowances for the enervating influence of a tropical climate, I have been forced to conclude that India, despite its having harboured so many keen thinkers, was prevented for a thousand years and more from moving forward by the misguided efforts of a superstitious priesthood.

Nevertheless, if there is any contribution to be made to our quest of truth by Eastern thought, whether ancient or modern, the loftiest, I believe, would be the idea that until there is a re-orientation of our own search from its objective phase to a purely subjective one, the realisation of the highest truth, as opposed to its mere intellectual discernment, will continue to elude us. For let us not forget that even the Western scientist who postulates a spiritual basis for the universe has done nothing more than perform an intellectual operation ; he has not come into personal contact with that

spiritual basis as the ancient Asiatic thinkers assert that he could. But can man really transcend the intellect? The wisest men of the East have always declared that he can, and it will be Sir S. Radhakrishnan's none too easy, but nevertheless congenial task at Oxford to expound this possibility in a manner and language conformable with our best educational traditions.

I have lately come down from the Himalaya mountains to live in a little South Indian township which is somewhat off the beaten track, but which through its possession of one of the largest Temples in India is also a place of pilgrimage. For some years, however, another kind of pilgrim has been coming here, intent not so much on seeing the Temple and obtaining some boon from its supposed Patron Deity, but on visiting a certain hermit who lives a couple of miles away and in obtaining his blessing. This holy man happens also to be quite an intellectual sage in his way, with the result that he engaged my deepest interest when I first came across him nearly seven years ago. He seems to me to be symbolic of the vanished India of antiquity when such men as himself were far more numerous and were held in the highest esteem. Although, of course, there are still plenty of so-called holy men wandering the Indian roads or living around the Temple precincts, most of them are recognised for what they are—idle, irresponsible beggars with very little 'holiness' about them. This individual to whom I am now referring shines out, however, as one of the rare exceptions. His name is Sri Ramana Maharishi, generally called 'The Maharishi' for short, the latter name being a compound of two Sanskrit words meaning 'great sage' or 'great seer.' For forty years he has lived either on or at the foot of the hill of Arunachala—a solitary peak which rises abruptly from the flat fields and scrub jungle that form the local scenery. The Maharishi

talks at times like a Grecian philosopher and constantly reiterates the dictum of Socrates : ' Man, know thyself.' For he repeats the words of the ancient scriptures of his people which teach that a ray of God lies buried in the human soul. He teaches this, however, not by reference to any scripture or book, but by reference, with the utmost humility, to his own personal experience. He lived for several years as a young man, and as the hermits of antiquity were wont to live, in a gloomy cavern high up on the hill-side, devoted to a life of mental abstraction and spiritual contemplation, his mind steeped in an introspective world which was as dark to normal human beings as the cave in which he habitually sat. When finally he emerged to a larger life, it gradually became known in wider and wider ripples throughout South India that here was a man like unto their ancient sages, a race almost gone from modern India. For he had attained union with Brahma, the Universal Soul. Be that as it may, the Hindus regard him as a Divine Man, as a living Temple to whom it is their privilege and duty to pay homage and to make of him an object of pilgrimage. To a European mind, however, his interest lies less in his alleged divinity, for he works no miracles whatever, than in his illustration in the flesh of the kind of thing which was held to be so important in the remote past of this land.

Curiously enough, nearly all the visitors to the Maharishi, including the present writer and Europeans he has brought with him, feel a profound peace descending upon them whenever they sit for awhile in the Sage's presence. It is as though human beings carried their atmosphere around them, as in some invisible magnetic field. This is a fact which has been noticed so many times as to become a commonplace through mere familiarity. It would be

interesting to have a scientific explanation of this phenomenon. Or, is there really something in the claims for the Maharishi's uniqueness ?

He is a Brahmin, of course, for the Brahmins have been the keepers of India's wisdom. The Maharishi knows little of our sciences of the West. Darwin, Kelvin, Thomson, Lodge, Jeans and Einstein are not even names to him. Yet, sometimes, I hear him saying things which seem to be but Western science wearing Hindu dress or Yogi's loin-cloth. For instance, 'without the infinite power which subsists behind all phenomena and dwells as their hidden source, this incense stick would not burn, the atoms of this table would not hold together and this universe even would cease to exist. This power is in all forms. It alone gives them reality.' I hear again the electronic theory reappearing under an Oriental guide. The thing that interests me, however, is that he says these things not out of any book-learning, but out of an inner mystical perception at which he claims, in absolute modesty of soul, to have arrived.

With his passing one day there will pass a figure like unto one out of the East's remote past, a symbolic personage who to-day represents an almost vanished, but once potent, period of Asia's spiritual history.

Tiruvannamalai, Madras Presidency.

‘CRUDEN’S CONCORDANCE.’

(1737-1937)

BY THE HON. RALPH SHIRLEY.

IN an age when centenaries and bi-centenaries and ter-centenaries are constantly being celebrated, it seems only fitting that the bi-centenary of the first issue of *Cruden’s Concordance* should meet with some meed of recognition. In Alexander Cruden’s case at any rate the good that he did has not, in the Shakespearian phrase, ‘been interrèd with his bones.’ What infinities of labour and waste of time has not that invaluable book of reference saved, not only to the Cleric, but to everyone who has had occasion to search for some scriptural quotation ‘to point a moral and adorn a tale,’ or perchance for some purpose of spiritual enlightenment or critical research !

Not only did Cruden devote years of toil to this invaluable work, but he also risked money which he could ill afford and for which the first edition of the work dedicated to Queen Caroline, Consort of George II, in the year 1737 failed to reimburse him. Though the Queen was prompt to express appreciation of his labours and stated that she would not fail to remember the author, her death the same year robbed him of his justifiable expectations in that direction.

Born on May 31, 1699, a Scot by nationality and son of a merchant and Bailie (or Alderman) of Aberdeen, Alexander Cruden was the second of eleven children, so, though his parents were comfortably off, his share of their patrimony was a small one. He was educated, in the first place, at the

Grammar School of that city in which it is not without interest to recall that ninety years later the poet Byron took his early lessons. But in the meantime the school-house had been rebuilt, whereas in Cruden's time it was a very unpretentious group of buildings surrounding the principal school-room over which was a loft. During the winter the boys met there at nine o'clock in the morning, but in the warmer weather at the amazingly early hour of six. Here they were taught Latin and rhetoric, as well as being strictly educated in the principles of religion. They had only twelve days' holiday throughout the year, so that it seems to have been a case of much work and little play. Subsequently Alexander Cruden was sent to Marischal College ; where at the age of nineteen he took the degree of Master of Arts.

This College had been founded in 1593 by George, fifth Earl Marischal, whose principles represented an extreme form of Presbyterianism. At the period of Alexander Cruden's boyhood the dispute between rival forms of religion was aggravated by the problem of allegiance to two rival dynasties, the Stuarts and the Hanoverians. Bailie Cruden, along with most of the merchants and tradesmen of the city, was on the side of the Hanoverians, but the clergy and the rank and file of the townspeople supported the Stuart Cause. During the rising of 1715 Alexander's father was compelled to submit to the indignity of having Stuart soldiers quartered in his house. The interlude was, however, a brief one and the Bailie soon found himself once more on the winning side and his son's sympathies were entirely enlisted in the same cause as his father's.

Unfortunately whilst a student at the University Alexander Cruden fell desperately in love with a daughter of a minister at Aberdeen, a devotion on his part which was not reciprocated.

cated by the lady. This early disappointment acting on an abnormally sensitive nature temporarily upset his mental balance and he was confined for a short time by his friends in the Tolbooth, there being no asylum then in existence apart from the prison.

In due course he recovered from this shock, but the blow left its mark on his over-susceptible temperament to the end of his life, although he was doubtless fortunate in his escape, as the lady in question formed an illicit attachment to one of her own brothers, so could hardly have made him a desirable partner in marriage. From time to time during his life Cruden suffered from a recurrence of these nervous affections, and his consequent temporary confinements led to an exposure by him of the evil conditions which prevailed in institutions of the kind at this period.

After his recovery from his first mental breakdown, he determined, like so many of his compatriots, to journey southwards and try his fortunes in London. Here he arrived in the year 1722 at the age of three-and-twenty, and in the first instance obtained a succession of engagements as private tutor to youths preparing for the University. During this period of his career he visited the Isle of Man in this capacity and did not return permanently to London till 1732, when he obtained employment as a proof-reader. Later on, his industry and labours having met with appreciation, he obtained an introduction to Sir Robert Walpole and through his influence was appointed in 1735 book-seller to Queen Caroline. It was at this point that he applied himself seriously to the compilation of the *Concordance* which was for ever after to be associated with his name. The disappointment he met with over the expenses incurred in the production of this voluminous work and his failure to recover them led to a second mental breakdown. On this occasion

he was placed in an institution at Bethnal Green, where he was immured for nine weeks and six days and whence he eventually escaped after suffering much brutal and unjustifiable treatment.

These brief periods of incarceration never interfered for long with his literary activities, and subsequently he superintended the publication of a series of Greek and Roman Classics, in addition to bringing out a second and third revised edition of his *Concordance*. The second edition was published in 1761 and presented in person to King George III, who made him a donation of £100 on the occasion. One can well imagine the appreciation of that very conscientious but ill-advised monarch for Alexander Cruden's painstaking labours on behalf of the Christian community, and we may suppose that few gifts that he made in the course of his long and troublous reign would have given him more satisfaction than the £100 bestowed on his pious but eccentric subject. Cruden must have little dreamt that the malady of which he was the occasional and unfortunate victim would end by claiming his Royal Master in a far more serious and aggravated form. 'Great wits to madness sure are near allied,' sang the poet, but the victims of mental disease have not been chosen on so exclusive a basis. We think among sovereigns and monarchs of Nebuchadnezzar, of Caligula, of George III and of Ludwig of Bavaria and we find no justification for the implication contained in the familiar line, even if it may find countenance to some extent in such cases as that of Jonathan Swift, of Cowper, of Blake, the poet and artist, of Rousseau, of Nietzsche and indeed of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, to whom perhaps the debt of the British Empire is greater than to any other one man. The most powerful intellects of all seem to have been remarkably free from any such taint. No one would suspect

Shakespeare of madness, and perhaps of all great men in the world's history, Wolfgang von Goethe was the sanest and most level-headed.

Alexander Cruden's tenacity of purpose must often have made him a sore trial to his friends and especially to the ladies whose hands he sought in marriage, for he was utterly incapable of taking 'no' for an answer; but this same quality of tenacious perseverance, coupled with a lasting devotion to Biblical study, made him the ideal person to compile a *Concordance*, for what to other people would have presented itself as a most tedious form of drudgery was to our hero a veritable labour of love. Needless to say there had been other *Concordances* before Cruden's time, but they were far less complete and of a very inferior quality to the volume which has now stood the test of two centuries and bids fair to continue its career of usefulness for many years to come. What Thucydides said of his history, viz. that it was intended by him to be a *κτῆμα ἐς αἰón*, a work of enduring and permanent value, might have been said with equal justice by Alexander Cruden of his *Concordance*.

One point in especial should be stressed in connection with the life story of Alexander Cruden. He was a genuine humanitarian. In fact, it may be said of him that he was a philanthropist before the days when philanthropy became popular. He was never tired of denouncing the disgraceful condition of the prisons in Great Britain when no statesman or politician took the smallest interest in the matter, and the condition of asylums for the mentally afflicted, an evil from which he himself had been a grievous sufferer, came in, as already stated, for his most vehement condemnation. This was a period when the commission of trivial thefts was liable to lead to the gallows, and Cruden, in at least one instance, was instrumental in saving a harmless lad from the

gallows at the eleventh hour, refusing to be thwarted by the innumerable obstacles placed in his way.

Richard Potter, whom Cruden by his timely intervention was successful in rescuing, was at the age of twenty a reliable and experienced seaman, but coming on shore at the London Docks fell a victim to one of the ruffians that frequented those parts and was left stunned in the street with his money stolen. Meeting with another sailor, on recovering his senses, he was offered half a guinea to personate an absent friend in order to claim thirty-five shillings prize money. Potter in his penniless condition consented to the proposal, but the subterfuge was discovered and the unfortunate youth was arrested and, though strongly recommended to mercy, was sentenced to the gallows. Such was the law in those days. Cruden, happening to hear of the boy's terrible predicament, after endless difficulties and disappointments and after being assured repeatedly that his intervention had come too late, at length succeeded in obtaining an interview with Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State, who occupied a position similar to that of the Home Secretary in later times. The result was that he secured a reprieve of a fortnight for Potter within twenty-four hours of his intended execution and eventually got the sentence commuted to fourteen years' transportation. In the meantime Richard Potter was within an ace of falling a victim to the loathsome and insanitary conditions of the Newgate Gaol of those days ; but Cruden attended him daily, obtained for him clothes and wholesome food, and when the doctor he had engaged refused to attend him any longer from fear of infection, became nurse to him and doctor in one and patiently fed him with a spoon till the crisis of his illness was past.

Cruden endeavoured, it is to be feared with no immediate success, to save other prisoners from the foul conditions and

hardships which were their lot in gaol, and in presenting an account of the case to Parliament observed :

'It is to be lamented that this prison is so unwholesome and dangerous a place. They give the judges several dinners both on weekdays and on Sundays. Might not that money be better laid out in cleansing and repairing Newgate : I am not' (he added) 'persuaded that the Christian religion allows the taking away of life for stealing or robbing people of a small sum of money, but murder is a crime that in Scripture fully deserves death for its punishment.'

Numerous other stories are told of Cruden's essential piety and goodness of heart. By profession he was a Calvinistic dissenter, but his religion was not like that of so many others, a cloak of hypocrisy to impose upon the outside world. He was attended until his death by a prostitute whom he had rescued from the streets, and who became not only a reformed character but his faithful assistant in his labours and the work of his household.

In 1769 he visited his native home for the last time, when he delivered a series of lectures on moral subjects. In this year appeared the third edition of his *Concordance*. The second and third editions together brought him in a sum of £800 and more than compensated him for his earlier losses, so that he at least lived to see the value of the main labour of his life recognised and appreciated by the public for which it had been compiled.

After visiting Aberdeen and remaining there for a year, he again returned to London, where he took rooms in Camden Street, Islington. Here he died on November 1, 1770. His maid rang the bell on that morning to call him to breakfast. When he did not appear she went in search of him and found him kneeling in an attitude of prayer, but past all medical aid.

DARK HORSES.

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

[At Merton Magna, in East Devon, live Richard Challice, wheelwright, Ivy, his wife, Leonard, Samson, and Linda, his children, and Verity, his old mother. Simon Pye, friendly, retired neighbour, engages Richard to look after his orchard and Linda as maidservant: he makes friends with the Challices and gives Richard his dream, a piece of land on which is a disused lime-kiln. Simon's son, Gerald, visits his father and sets his snares for Linda. Gerald murderously drives over Richard as he tries to prevent Linda's elopement. After long silence Linda returns home—alone. Verity dies; Simon leaves Merton Magna. Richard, crippled and bankrupt, decides to relieve his family of the burden of his life.]

XXIII.

HASTE.

THERE came a mild, starry night near the end of October when Richard Challice took his way to the 'Cat and Fiddle' and reflected as he went that his visits would soon be numbered. He proposed to destroy himself about the middle of November and no increasing concern marked the passage of days. He compared himself with men condemned to death and marked the difference. 'Such as them know to an hour when they must drop,' he reflected, 'and so they die before their death; but I'm free and no fellow-creature will have the undoing of me. I ain't under no man's sentence, being my own judge and jury.'

At the inn that night he sat in the ingle-nook and enjoyed himself. There was a discussion concerning the Fifth of November and David Beedell referred it to Dick.

'The past is past,' he said, 'and what was done didn't trouble your family overmuch as I remember. But we mind

the cleverness of your son, Leonard, and it's the opinion of some of these chaps that we ought to keep up the old custom, now that we've restored it, and do the same again.'

'You wasn't set on burning Gerald Pye again?' asked Richard, 'because I wouldn't stand for that, David. The past is past, as you say, and it would be a very ill-convenient thing to——'

The postman interrupted.

'Not on your life, Dick. That's all over and done with and there's nobody left here to care a curse about him. The point is who the sinner shall be this time. Young Pye ain't the only pebble on the beach, and we're turning over the doubtful ones before we give Len the tip to make another "Guy."'

The talk ranged and Challice stood a round of drinks. He told them that Leonard had shot a woodcock in Withy Platt, and Date declared he was wrong. Some argued that shooting in the marsh and sallow thickets was not poaching, while others believed it to be so. Then they talked of game, and Matthew told of past massacres in the days when he would beat for the quality.

'Nought's what it was,' he said. 'They don't raise a quarter the pheasants they did, and the young shotsmen don't shoot near so straight as the old, and the gun dogs ain't a patch on the old dogs in their field work. Everything's going down. Hounds have met three times in the last fortnight and not killed a fox cub. There's a rot in our sports like in all else.'

The company turned to less difficult problems and amiability was restored. But David Beedell wanted a word with the wheelwright before he went home and told him so. Richard agreed, and when closing time came he remained and listened patiently to the counsel of his friend.

‘I’m doing this on my own responsibility, Dick,’ began David, ‘and if what I say should vex you, on my shoulders is the blame. You know I’m your friend and always have been, and I wanted to send round the hat for you after your terrible misfortune. I’d have done it but for your sons, who told me you wouldn’t like it. But in my bar I listen to all manner of opinions, and I’m wishful to say in confidence that the general view round these parts is that you ought to have a meeting of your creditors and get peace with honour.

‘It’s a very respectable thing to do,’ continued David, ‘and you can make your mind easy that you wouldn’t be up against any fierce opposition, or hard words. You’re a most well-thought-upon man and the people are friendly inclined. There’s twenty on your side and not half a dozen against. But there it is—a spot of money on your debts, Dick. The practice is to declare something in the pound; and if you could do that, it would have a very soothing result for them who have pretty well abandoned the hope of ever getting anything at all. ’Tis called a “composition” for the reason that it composes the minds of your creditors and makes them see a ray of hope. If you could rise to that, my dear man, it might ease the strain before another winter and meet with a good bit of applause. And, be it as it will, I hope there’s no offence took where none’s intended.’

‘None in the world, Dave,’ replied Richard. ‘Quite the contrary in fact. You didn’t like telling me these things and they wasn’t what you might call news to me in any case. For your ear alone I may say that I’ve turned the question over a good few times at home, and my wife is all for it. But——’ Richard checked himself.

More than once of late before financial complications he had found his secret purpose on his tongue and been at pains to conceal it. He felt that all these matters would be happily

resolved when he was gone and itched to let his creditors know as much. Such problems indeed looked trifling from his standpoint ; but his heroic method of dealing with them might not be told and in his home circle of late he had gone so far as to consider bankruptcy and admit Ivy's suggestions were most reasonable. He proceeded.

'It's like this. I've figured it up and have got Linda to help me, her being bright at figures, which I never was. My debts, so to call 'em, total to somewhere round a hundred and fifty pounds—a lot of money, granted ; but against 'em, of course, there's quite a few items owed to me. They're small, however, and for the most part won't be paid—not through any ill will, mind you, but because the people are uncommon poor and can't find the money.'

'Well, a hundred and fifty ain't what you might call a crusher—you with solid property behind you,' argued Beedell. 'In a manner of speaking, it's your solid property behind you that makes the people restless, because they say a propertied man didn't ought to withhold his money from them that want it a lot more than him.'

Richard nodded. Under the weight of his secret purpose he had often come near lying lately and spoken with confidence of times and occasions which he knew that he would never see ; but he disliked the need for falsehood, and though now tempted to promise immediate action along the lines his friend advised, would not do so.

'Everything you say is sound sense,' he answered, 'and I'll grant this. Failing a better way, your way's the right one. The time has come for me to make up my mind about it without a doubt.'

He strove to distract David's mind from the main point by raising a minor question.

'Sometimes I say to myself I might pick and choose and

pay off them that want the money most and let the bigger ones wait ; but that wouldn't be justice and might raise discords between man and man.'

'Treat 'em all alike,' advised David ; and then Richard rose, emptied a glass of brandy and water that Beedell had filled for him and prepared to depart.

He shook hands heartily, thanked the other for good counsel and promised at their next meeting his decision should be announced. Then he lighted his pipe and went on his way home.

It was dark but clear and dry, the time being about half-past ten.

Richard debated with himself and perceived that his determination clashed more and more against the lives of those who did not know it ; but he comforted himself with the thought that another fortnight would now bring him to appointed time and cut all knots. Then his simple mind considered whether it would not be well to agree to Beedell's proposal, announce a meeting of his creditors and take the preliminary steps to bankruptcy with a lawyer's assistance. On the one hand, if this were done, it would afford additional proof that his death was the accident it must appear ; on the other, such a pretence must be another falsehood, and he little liked dying with lies upon his conscience. 'In a manner of speaking, my death itself is a lie,' he reflected. 'Queer that a good deed should be built on untruth ; but against that you have to count upon what would overtake my family if the truth was blazed out.' He followed this thought and saw the agony of Linda, the shame of Ivy and the woe of his sons. He remembered a sermon to which he had listened, and that started a personal unrest. 'Parson's very clear on the subject,' he told himself, 'and all against self-destruction. If he was right, then I'm cheating religion and getting a Christian

funeral under false pretences. Some might bawlk at that.' He decided, however, that it mattered only for the sake of appearances. 'Ivy is all for appearances,' he thought, 'and must be considered in that matter; but for my own part, holding the deed for righteousness, I care not how I'm planted so long as the Lord digs me up.' From this reflection he passed to another. 'Suppose they was never to find me?' he asked himself. 'It might so happen, and though there will be no mystery about it, yet the thought of my bones far ways from a peaceful pit would fret Linda uncommon.' He mused on Linda, for she was the only treasure he had not quite parted from in spirit. 'All changed in the twinkling of an eye, same as David told,' he said to himself, 'so, even if we met again up over when her turn came, belike I shouldn't know her.' He shook his head. 'No, by God, I'll know her—I'll know her through any disguises, and old mother, too.'

Dreaming in this fashion and speculating on his last 'good-byes' Richard came to the footbridge in Withy Platt. It was a light, wooden fabric standing two hundred yards above the main bridge of stone where he had been struck down, and he usually delayed a few minutes here when alone, since the spot was the last that he designed to see on earth.

'The bright thing about saying them "good-byes" in any case is this,' mused the man. 'Only me myself will know I'm saying them. There's no pang to others because it won't be any more than saying "good night" to a neighbour you count to meet again at morn. So they escape that and only I shall know. And I'll need to bear up pretty stiff when it comes to Linda.' A great shooting star twinkled over his head, leaving one momentary streak of light against the void. 'Mother used to say that every time a star shot, there was a child born,' he remembered, 'and every time you heard

a frog croak by night, a man or woman died. Why not ?

He stood on the bridge, leant upon his crutches and lighted his pipe again. It was very still and only the deep water rushing to the river made any sound. It lapped and gurgled restlessly beneath him, pushing on to meet Exe half a mile distant. ' 'Twill roll me over a bit,' he thought, ' but I'm heavy, and when I come to sink, I shan't go far. The current runs 'pon top and don't speed so fast under. All quiet down there.'

He prepared to push onward, and then a great thought came to him suddenly and mastered him. Like a ray of light upon the darkness, clear and steadfast it shone, and in that sudden illumination Richard saw his doubts solved, his difficulties swept away. He stiffened and stared before him, turned in his tracks, spun round upon his crutches and went back to the footbridge, now fifty yards behind him.

' Of course,' he said aloud in the hollow silence. ' Of course, man ! Why the hell mess about and fret at nought and pile up lies against your going ? What's a morsel of days, more or less, but weariness if you can escape 'em ? Cheat the balance of 'em and be gone now !'

He proceeded with utmost haste, yet left nothing undone. With no little craft and much labour of mind he had gone over every detail, and since craft in this sort was strange to him, he spent all his wits upon it. He stood on the bridge and heard the church clock tell eleven. He took one deep pull from his pipe, then flung it and his hat into the water. Next he laid one crutch upon the bridge and dropped the other over. Now he supported himself by the handrail and waited a moment only. ' Always go when the going's good,' he said aloud ; and then he said another thing. ' Jack Ketch couldn't have done it quicker !'

A moment later he had flung his weight upon the wooden rail. It smashed and he fell head first into the river.

Ethelinda Challice never went to bed until her father had returned home, for she chose always to see him safely into his room. He was usually in soon after ten o'clock, and to-night she began to grow anxious by half-past ten. At eleven she called her brother Samson and bade him rise. Together they went out, that they might seek Richard, much wondering why he had not come. The young man knew his father was going to the 'Cat and Fiddle' and they set out for the inn. Merton Magna slept and they saw nobody to question. Samson carried an electric torch and flashed it fitfully until they came to the footbridge. There he kept it on to guide their going, and they found the handrail upon one side broken down and their father's crutch lying upon the footway. It was very dark, but they descended to the rough bank of the river, cried out and strove to find some traces of Richard. They could see nothing and presently the torch failed. Scarcely a word had passed between them, but now Linda spoke.

'He's drowned for certain. He's gone, Samson. We'll get back to the police-station and rouse them.'

'You do that,' he answered, 'and I'll run to the inn and rouse up Mr. Beedell. He's got lanterns and we'll work on here till you bring Inspector.'

So they parted, and the woman ran back to the village while her brother went to the 'Cat and Fiddle' and woke up David Beedell. An hour later men were busy upon both banks of the river and lights flashed, voices called through the darkness. They found Richard's second crutch caught at the brink of the water, but could discover no other sign of him.

XXIV.

A WILL.

When they dragged the stream next day Richard Challice was quickly found, not many yards below the footbridge whence he had fallen.

‘Withy Platt has been an evil place for him,’ said Nicholas Tidy, the policeman, as he helped to bring the dead man from the net. ‘He was mangled at the stone bridge downstream and now he dies here.’

They carried Richard’s body to his home at Linda’s wish, for there was no mortuary to which they might bring him ; but two days later his open coffin was conveyed by night to the parish room and the following morning a coroner’s jury viewed it where the inquest was held. The sensation of their neighbour’s sudden death loosed many tongues and there were not lacking those who hinted at the possibility of suicide under the circumstances ; while morbid souls even spoke of a murder ; but nothing sinister could be discovered. David Beedell had been the last to see Challice alone, so far as it appeared, and his testimony pointed to misadventure alone,

Invited to describe the evening and Richard’s share of it, the innkeeper did so.

‘The usual parties were got together,’ he said, ‘and Mr. Challice had the seat he usually took in virtue of his affliction. A very cheerful company and all in order. He was so merry as any of us and in the best of spirits. He stood a round of drinks, as he often would, and took his part in the talk. After closing I wanted speech with him and we had a bit of a tell together about a private matter. He was with me for half an hour, if not longer, and he had one small brandy while we conversed ; but I should like to say that he left me as

sober as when he came in and no man has ever seen him the worse for drink in his life. I say that, because one here and there has thought maybe he ought to have had somebody along with him on such a dark night ; but there was no need at all.'

The coroner wanted David to explain the nature of the private conversation and, with reluctance, he did so.

'I put it to him strongly, as man to man, that he did ought to compound with a few people round about, him being in their debt,' he said. 'As an old, trusted friend I spoke to the late Mr. Challice, and he took it in his usual kindly fashion and confessed that the matter was in his mind and had been so for a long time. Before we parted he so good as promised to get on with it.'

'He left you in good spirits ?'

'He did, sir. The last I heard of him was a laugh. A great one for a good laugh.'

'His mind was clear ?'

'His mind was slow-moving to grasp any uncommon idea, I'd say, but clear enough when he did. He never laid down the law—a most open-minded man. We all noticed after his fearful accident, when his leg was lost and his head hurt, that he grew a thought more simple-minded ; but that's not to say weak-minded—far from it. Never was a saner fashion of man : always ready to see the best side of things.'

Members of Richard's family testified that, while anxious about his difficulties and concerned to take the needful steps, he had preserved his usual patience and looked forward to better times. No suggestion or hint had ever passed his lips that he desired to leave life, or imagined anything might be gained by doing so.

The coroner summed up very briefly and declared the jury's problem to be simple.

‘Our evidence would seem to be complete and admit of no question,’ he said. ‘You have learned how Richard Challice—a lame man who depended upon his crutches for active movement—was returning upon a dark night by the wooden bridge and how, upon that bridge, his son and daughter, seeking him, found one of his crutches and discovered that the rail of the bridge had been broken down. You have heard how his body was recovered from the river on the following day and that the doctors found no injury upon it, but that his death was the result of drowning. The dead man suffered from financial anxiety and designed to confront his difficulties on the advice of his friends. He was of a sanguine temperament and, by all accounts, quite the last to shorten his own life under the passing stress from which he suffered. Self-destruction, so far as our human knowledge and experience of him is concerned, may therefore be ruled out of your calculations on any theory, for the sanity of Richard Challice is not questioned. There remains the assumption that, handicapped by darkness, perhaps deep in thought as a result of his conversation with Mr. Beedell, he was proceeding without due care, that at the critical moment of crossing the somewhat frail structure of the bridge, his crutch slipped and his considerable weight proved more than the handrail could support. You will, however, deliberate every probability that his unfortunate death may offer to your united minds.’

Many people attended the funeral of Richard and not a few stood upon old Challice graves to see his bright yellow coffin sink into the dust of his forefathers ; while on the following Sunday more than the customary congregation attended church, that they might pay respect to the dead man’s family and listen to the funeral sermon. For the old vicar respected that venerable custom and liked to comment on any passing.

He was a precisian and a rigid formalist, who lost no opportunity of reminding his flock concerning dogmas apt to be forgotten—a stout buttress of faith, as he held that every clergyman should be.

So died the head of the house of Challice, while a fortnight later the family's affairs were taken in hand and Ivy set about her task. Her sons were in work and it was agreed that Samson should continue at the smithy, while John Caryl controlled it and made certain changes that he had long desired. Linda was going back into service and would thus help the home to the best in her power. She suffered a period of great grief at her father's death, but kept it secret since neither her mother nor her brothers were able to appreciate her angle of vision, or estimate the nature of her loss. Indeed, she found, somewhat unexpectedly, that Miss Mingo best understood her sorrow and had imagination to perceive how lonely Richard's daughter must feel with her ministry ended.

'Get away from it, my girl,' counselled Susan. 'Turn your back on all the little, heart-shaking things that bring him into your mind at every turn. I know—none better—for when my own dear father went, he'd keep popping up, like a busy ghost, in the shop and out of it, till nothing but duty and his dying directions held me here to carry on. And still he'll jump out upon me—from a cupboard or a drawer—and set me to palpitate. So you get away to work beyond they reminders and just think of him peaceful and busy some place else along with your grandmother and waiting patient for your turn to come.'

A minor mystery troubled Linda when she had leisure to think upon it. In an hour of anti-climax on the day of Richard's funeral she had gone to her room, to shed the tears that none ever saw and write a long account of her father's end for Mr. Pye. She had despatched it to his direction at

Mentone and much counted upon reading the things that he would say in answer. But that was now three weeks ago and she had received no reply. The fact perplexed Linda, for it was much unlike their friend. She feared that her letter must have miscarried and was minded to write again. But before she had done so there came the explanation. A message reached Ivy from the vicarage and she was asked to call there at her earliest convenience. In doubt as to what the summons could signify, Mrs. Challice waited upon her pastor within an hour and learned the news.

‘First I will ask you, Ivy,’ said the reverend gentleman, ‘whether a letter directed to my late good friend, your husband, reached Church Cottage a week ago and, if so, why you did not open it and reply to it?’

She reflected.

‘It did, then. Yes it did, sir, and I put it on the mantelshelf for Linda to read. I couldn’t bring myself to open it, somehow, and I thought being wrote in type, it was only a circular or some such thing. I set it behind the clock, sir, and forgot all about it till this instant moment. I find my great affliction have done a lot of harm to my memory, your reverence.’

‘The letter came from a lawyer—one Mr. Platt—and it was, of course, written under the impression that dear Richard still lived. You will find upon reading it that it invited Mr. Challice to wait upon the lawyer at his London address, that he might learn some important information—good and bad. Receiving no reply and guessing that the family might have changed their address, Mr. Platt has written to me, as vicar of the parish, for information concerning you and I have informed him of the melancholy facts. He received my letter this morning and has telephoned begging me to inform you that he will call upon you

in person on Wednesday next. He expects to be at Church Cottage not later than three o'clock and begs that you and your children will make a point of all being present.'

'We'll do as he ordains, sir, and if there's bad news, I'm glad that my dear husband was took from the evil to come. But if there happens any good, I'm sorry he's missed it.'

The vicar did not enlighten her as to details.

'Good and bad news have an art to reach us together,' he answered. 'I always understood from Richard that Mr. Pye had extended the hand of friendship to him—not empty, as the hand of friendship so often is. My personal knowledge of the worthy man was slight, but I entertained a favourable opinion of him.'

At home again Mrs. Challice told her news and read the letter still unopened behind the mantelpiece clock. It revealed no more than she knew, and she and Linda considered the possibilities. The truth did not enter into their minds until a lawyer waited upon them, and then they understood and listened to another ironic comedy of chance.

At ten minutes before three o'clock on the appointed day, a small, grey-haired man emerged from a taxi-cab at Church Cottage and Leonard opened the door to him. He entered the parlour, shook hands with Ivy and Linda, smiled upon the young men, took the chair awaiting him and introduced himself.

'I am Mr. Platt,' he said, 'the attorney of my late valued friend, and your valued friend, Mr. Simon Pye.'

A united gasp of astonishment rose from the family.

'Lor'!' sighed Mrs. Challice, 'Mr. Pye gone? And we were given to understand he was that much better, sir.'

'Nevertheless, he has passed,' answered the visitor, 'and the manner of his passing I shall tell you before I proceed. My old client paid me a visit before he left England to winter in

the South of France. He was then his steadfast and kindly self, in reasonable good health and confident that an escape from an English winter might be wise. He was no traveller and did not apprehend any particular pleasure from his change ; but his physician had pressed it upon him, as there were certain asthmatical symptoms the doctor did not like. We lunched together, and then I bade him "good-bye," little guessing that I should not see him again. Within seven days the bad news reached me. Mr. Pye had taken a room at a hotel, and the hotel was unhappily full of influenza patients. Honour on the part of the proprietor should have warned him of the prevalent infection ; but Simon received no warning, arrived very weary from his journey and in twenty-four hours had contracted the complaint in a violent form. An English doctor attended him but failed to save his life. He died five days later, on the twenty-sixth of October last.'

'Two days after my own dear husband, sir,' sighed Ivy. 'What a blow this would have been to him.'

'Yes, two days after—so your vicar informed me—and much hangs upon the fact, Mrs. Challice, as you will learn,' promised Mr. Platt. 'These two fine men both passed to their account within that narrow space of time, but a day may be as vital as a decade in the eyes of the Law, when arises the dispensation of property and the administering of a will.'

He took a bag from the floor beside him, drew his chair to the table and spoke again.

'If you will kindly remove some of these books and ornaments and give me a little room,' he said, 'I shall read you such portions of Mr. Pye's last testament as concerns you, and I have a copy of the complete will which I shall leave with you.'

‘My!’ murmured Ivy, ‘did the dear gentleman remember us?’

‘Were you ignorant of the fact that he designed to do so?’ asked Mr. Platt, and she answered that a bequest was the last thing in their minds.

‘He gave my husband a piece of land for his own when he lived here,’ she added, ‘and when he went away to Bournemouth, we never thought he’d do more.’

‘He sent Father a gift of money last summer for us to have a trip to the sea,’ said Linda, ‘and he bought my grandmother’s tombstone.’

Mr. Platt nodded.

‘Like him to keep his beneficent intentions to himself,’ he explained. ‘He was a man whose left hand seldom learned what his right hand did. Fate has at least saved him this trial, for could he know, it would have been a grief to learn that his friend was already beyond reach of his bequest. But doubtless the next best thing he would feel is that Mr. Challice’s family should inherit. And now I may tell you that you have to thank me for this happy eventuality. Not for the thought, not for the generous and kindly provision itself; but for the fortunate fact that you are not deprived of it by the death of Mr. Challice. That would inevitably have happened had I not taken pains to guard against any such contingency—remote though it appeared to be.’

Mr. Platt waited for some words of gratitude upon this information, but they did not come because none of his hearers knew what he was talking about.

‘I will elucidate my meaning later,’ he said, ‘since you evidently don’t apprehend it. For the moment let me turn to the will.’

‘Yes, please, sir,’ begged Mrs. Challice.

The lawyer opened his bag and spread some papers before him.

‘When executing his purpose as here embodied,’ he began, ‘Mr. Pye informed me that you were a family at one time called to suffer very grave wrongs for which, though not the cause himself needless to say, he none the less felt indirectly responsible. He considered himself as deeply in the late Mr. Challice’s debt, and the extent of his obligation will immediately appear. I know nothing of the particulars and have, of course, no wish to know them ; but they weighed with him to such an extent that they now take shape as the most considerable bequests under his will. He was buried, by the way, at Mentone, in the cemetery upon a hill above the town with many of his British compatriots.’

They said nothing and Mr. Platt fingered his papers and went on, playing with the long words he loved. Circumstances concerning his own prescience had greatly pleased the little lawyer, and he felt that another effort must be made to help the Challices understand. He knew nothing whatever about them but desired their future goodwill for a sufficient reason.

‘I must remind you now,’ he continued, ‘that for your good fortune I am directly responsible. You will appreciate that, I think. Had it not been for certain provisos—incorporated in this document at my direction—a very different state of affairs would need to be recorded. However, I looked ahead and considered possibilities. They were remote enough, as I told you before, and as my client impressed upon me ; but it is the remote contingency which must never be lost sight of in my profession and the unexpected event provided for. A striking example of these truths is afforded by the case under our consideration.

‘Mr. Pye was quick to appreciate the point when I put it to

him,' proceeded the visitor. 'He desired his legacy to reach your family in any event and, on learning that if by accident Mr. Richard Challice should predecease him, his bequest would lapse and fall into the residue of his own estate, he invited me to obviate any such happening, improbable though it might be. I did so under the following direction and made it clear that, if Mr. Challice should have deceased before Mr. Pye, the said sum would, none the less, devolve as if Richard Challice had survived the testator.'

Mr. Platt beamed upon his hearers, for a moment forgetting the sad significance of his story before the joy of such a personal triumph.

'And just that happened,' he proceeded. 'Just that unlikely event confronts us, as unlikely events are so apt to do, and the testator's purpose is rendered secure by my prevention. Tell me now, did Mr. Challice leave a will behind him?'

'My father was often minded to write a will,' said Linda, 'but we don't find he did so, sir.'

'Fear nothing on that account,' smiled Mr. Platt, 'for in that case Section Number forty-six of the Administration of Estates Act (1925) comes into operation and provides that Mr. Pye's legacy shall still form part of your parent's ordinary estate.'

The little man again waited commendation, but nobody spoke. 'Pearls before swine,' he told himself, and then he opened the will.

'This at any rate may perhaps awaken some measure of enthusiasm,' he said dryly, 'for what do we find? We learn that Mr. Pye has left to Mr. Richard Challice the sum of fifteen thousand pounds, and to Miss Ethelinda Challice the sum of five thousand pounds. So much for that. The latter sum becomes the property of Miss Challice absolutely

and at once ; but since Mr. Richard Challice has not lived to enjoy his legacy, or to express his intentions concerning its ultimate disposal, the Law speaks for him with no uncertain voice. The Law decrees that Mrs. Challice shall receive one thousand pounds and a life interest in half the remainder. Subtract one thousand from fifteen thousand, and fourteen thousand remains. Thus we find that Mrs. Challice will appropriate a life interest in seven thousand pounds, while the remaining seven thousand passes to the children of Mr. Richard Challice in equal shares absolutely.'

'How wonderful !' murmured Ivy, and the delight of her sons was manifest. Only Linda had turned pale and no joy lighted her face.

'Seven thousand, then,' continued Mr. Platt, 'becomes the property of Samson, Leonard and Ethelinda, and they will receive two thousand, three hundred and thirty-three pounds, six shillings and eightpence each, the bequests being free of all legacy duty. There remains one other point for your enlightenment. The seven thousand pounds, in which Mrs. Challice enjoys a life interest only, must be held in trust for the duration of her life ; and it will then pass to you three children in equal shares absolutely. Now you all know precisely how you stand. Mr. Pye's will embraces other bequests to old friends and retainers of the past ; but the most substantial proportion of his estate is represented by your legacies. He expressed a personal desire, not embodied in the will, that your late father should consult me as to any questions that may arise ; but now that is a matter for your own decision.'

Ivy expressed a hope that Mr. Platt would look after them.

'It means far-reaching things for us, sir,' she said, 'because by the looks of it, we can do what me and my sons have been

long minded to do and leave Merton and go foreign. It was always our wish to travel to Australia, or some such place as that ; but the chance never offered. And now, with this big money behind us, we can all do it.'

The lawyer rose, returned his papers to his bag, but handed one to Mrs. Challice.

'That is a copy of the will,' he said, 'and you will receive your legacies within a few weeks. If you should wish to leave your affairs in my hands, I shall be willing to administer them. Since you propose to leave England, there will be a certain amount of business attending your departure and the transfer of your moneys and so forth when you have decided where you are going. The money is all in gilt-edged securities at present. I shall be at your service. And now I will go on my way.'

Suddenly Samson blurted out an unexpected question.

'What price Mr. Pye's son, Mr. Gerald Pye?' he asked, and the visitor started and drew up.

'Why does that interest you?' he asked.

'Well, we know all about him, sir, and he was down here a lot—and——'

Mr. Platt, though ignorant of facts, was informed of human nature. He knew all about Gerald Pye and he perceived that Linda Challice was a very beautiful girl. Dimly he guessed at possibilities, took off his hat and sat down again.

'You may or may not have sufficient reasons for asking that question,' he said, 'but there are circumstances in my knowledge that dispose me to answer it. I am rather glad you have put it, Mr. Challice.'

He turned to Ivy.

'I wonder if I might ask you to give me a cup of tea,' he said.

She looked at Linda, who departed at once, and then Mr. Platt, after a brief pause to select his words, addressed them again.

‘The nature of your connection with my dear late friend I neither know nor desire to know,’ he began, ‘but I gather it was of a more or less intimate character, and I shall not be abusing the confidence of the dead if I impart certain information in answer to your son’s question.’

He paused again, then spoke in general terms.

‘If wisdom cannot come with age, tolerance should at least do so, and tolerance may be a very useful part of wisdom. In most affairs of life Simon Pye was an exceptionally wise and tolerant man, and the way he bore his own rheumatic afflictions might have been considered a lesson to everybody. But for his only son he entertained a distrust of long standing which, far from growing less, deepened of late years into acute antagonism. Mr. Pye was a stern moralist, and I much fear that Gerald offended in this particular and created barriers that were never broken down. Be the reasons what they may, when the younger man endeavoured to make friends with his father at Bournemouth, he was sternly denied and informed that Mr. Pye had no desire ever to see him again. That much I know from Gerald Pye himself, because, upon Simon’s death, the young man came to me to learn what he might of his father’s dispositions. I made no secret of them and informed him that he was not remembered. The alienation was complete and Mr. Simon remained obdurate to the end ; but I may tell you that a substantial fact lessens this unpaternal attitude. Gerald Pye recently attained the age of thirty, and then he came into his mother’s money, a considerable sum upon which he had been receiving the interest for a good many years.’

At this moment Linda returned with a cup of tea and some

slices of bread and butter, and Mr. Platt thanked her. He was silent while he ate and drank.

Then he bade them 'good-bye,' reminding them that they would find his address upon the will, and left them. When he was gone the Challices sat quite silent for a few moments. Then Samson got paper and pencil and began to note down figures. They fell to chattering presently, all save the girl, and when Leonard marked her silence he spoke to her.

'You're the richest of the lot of us,' he said, 'and sit so calm as an image.'

'I was wondering when any of you would mention Father,' she answered, and went to get their tea.

XXV.

THE PROMISED LAND.

Immense interest awakened in Merton Magna when the good fortune of the Challices came to be learned. Folk hummed with comments and all agreed that the old name would soon now vanish from the hamlet. According to their natures the people discussed the event, and some said such a will was another argument for socialism; and some thought it absurd, and some, like Mr. Beedell, mused chiefly on Richard Challice and how such a great legacy must have rejoiced and relieved him. His creditors were universally elated, for their money was in sight. Women grudged Ivy Challice her riches and men laughed at the picture of the Challice brothers building a fortune in a foreign land.

'What's the use of being worth thousands of pounds if in every other respect you ain't worth a curse?' asked Saul Date at the 'Cat and Fiddle.' It was a question he often asked.

But Samson and Leonard were modest about their fortune. They spent their evenings at the inn, stood a good many drinks and related their determination as to the future.

‘We’re all going to Australia—New South Wales,’ Leonard told them. ‘Sam and I are out for an orange farm on the Parramatta river nigh to the town of Sydney. There’s a gréat future for fruit-growing there.’

He counted, however, without one member of the family, and some reconsideration of their plans fell to the lot of Mrs. Challice when she made an unexpected discovery. Certain things had been taken for granted, but since her talk of the coming exodus never won any response from her daughter, there came a night when Linda was challenged. A week had passed since the lawyer’s visit and their minds were growing used to the thought of their changed estate. Linda had shown very little emotion before any of them and neither supported nor suggested when they talked together so, on a day when they were alone, her mother asked her to show more ardour and happiness.

‘’Tis no use always brooding on how it would have been if your dear father had been spared, child,’ she said. ‘God’s way is not our way and he was took to his own promised land for good reasons hid from us, and we shall pay all his debts and leave his name to be held in honour behind us. But that’s no good reason why we shouldn’t turn our eyes to our own promised land, which is Australia, where there’s a rich climate by all accounts and the chance for your brothers to come into their deserts. And who more pleased, if he knew about it, than your dear father? He’d be the last to want for you to mope. And nobody better suited to Australia than yourself, I should think, for what could have happened more merciful and convenient for you? A proper shower of blessings I’d call it, because now you can

leave the past behind you and all them that know the past, and come to a new land in your prime of beauty and promise.'

Linda laughed. She had uttered one passionate expression of regret and grief that her father had died upon the brink of these good tidings, and her forcible way of putting it had struck her brothers dumb and astonished her mother; but since then she had said but little and revealed no personal interest in their future plans. Now, however, she spoke.

'I was going to tell you about myself,' she said, 'only I hadn't quite settled up with myself till now. But now I've figured it out. I'm not wishful to do anything to alter your plans, Mother, and I quite think you and the boys will be a lot happier in foreign parts and I hope they'll be all you count upon; but I'm not going to Australia. I'm going to stop here and work out my own life in my own way.'

Ivy dropped her work.

'Not coming to Australia, Linda?' she asked. 'Is that fair to Samson and Leonard, not to name me?'

'I've thought of that. I'll tell you what I want to happen; but I'm not going anyway.'

'You're not more than a child yet—how should you carry on without a mother's care, Linda?'

'Same as I mostly have,' answered the girl. 'And I'm a lot more than a child. I've learned more than I've lost, and I've got a chance out of this money to try an experiment I was always wishful to try. I saw the workings all the time I was in service, and it's a thing that will cost very little indeed and may bring in pretty good returns. I'll tell you about that in a minute. I'm going to stop in Merton anyway—in this home and no other. I want to pay you and the boys one thousand pounds of my money for this house and for Father's bit of land. That's a good price, because I asked Mr. Beedell

and another independent man and they said so. So that will be another thousand for Australia.'

'What should you do with the ground? It's got no value, for I've enquired about it myself,' said Ivy.

'To others it may not have,' answered Linda, 'but it's mighty precious to me, because it was mighty precious to Father. I wouldn't part with that patch of ground if there was a diamond mine under it. And more than that: I'm going to do what I'll lay my life he would have done now if he'd lived. Yes, I am, Mother. I'm going to look after his grave and I'm going to put a light to his kiln. He always longed to burn lime, and so lime shall be burned.'

'You're mad,' said Ivy. 'Never was such folly as this.'

'I'm going to try it out, and if it fails, it fails; but he may have been right and all may go well with it.'

'You can't serve a kiln.'

'No, but I can look to the business side; and that's not all I'm going to do. I must work like Father worked—every working hour and more. I'm going to open a registry office for domestic servants in Redchester. The city's badly off for 'em and the people who run 'em are stupid and don't understand what ladies want. There's a great chance for a capable woman in that business and I've thought a lot upon it and looked into it. The cost is nought to start with. Just one room in a good part and advertising to get started. I've talked it over with women friends in Redchester and I'm going to do it.'

Ivy stared before this astounding manifestation of Linda.

'What will your brothers say to all this rigmarole?' she asked faintly.

'I care nothing what my brothers may say,' answered Linda. 'Let 'em go and learn to be men, same as I've learned to be a woman. Let 'em do all they've promised to do and

make as much out of their oranges as I'll make out of my registry office in three years' time.'

'They were calculating you was going to help with the expenses and outlay and wages and so on.'

'They'll have a thousand pounds of my money for Church Cottage and the land. That's all. 'Tis like them to reckon what they'll pay in wages rather than what they'll earn in work.'

'They'll do their manly share,' said Ivy. 'They've got the natures to rule rather than be ruled.'

She strove to change her daughter's mind, even attempted sentiment and declared that the new life would be a sorry business without Linda to share it.

'I'd thought of you happily married some day out there,' she said. 'I'd pictured you with a fine farm of your own, Linda, and a good husband, and grandchildren for me to pet. Won't seem like a home without you.'

But Linda was not moved.

'If things fall out all right and Sam and Len ain't wailing to come back again in a year's time, I'll run down and pay you a visit, Mother,' she promised. 'You'll hear how I'm faring and all the home news, and you'll write and tell me all about Australia and how the climate serves you.'

She found her brothers much concerned at her purpose, and money created its wonted bad feeling, friction and sense of wrong. They had taken Linda's seven thousand pounds somewhat deeply into their estimates and were contemplating an extensive orange orchard shared among them all. Leonard's imagination led to much happiness in connection with sport and adventures in the bush; while Samson dreamed of being in command, an employer of labour and a man of account on the countryside. They had much to learn concerning the socialism of South Australia; but, for the

moment, were angry with their sister and accused her of a selfish spirit. She bore these charges amiably, however, and helped them in all the necessary preparations. Richard Challice's remaining asset had been the smithy, and for this John Caryl offered a sum down and an annuity to Ivy for her life. All debts were paid, and while her family made ready to be gone, Linda set about her own affairs, repaired the kiln and opened a little registry office at Redchester.

There came a Sunday evening in January, some few weeks before Ivy and her sons took ship, when Susan Mingo drank tea with her departing friend. The post-mistress was very sociable and delighted to entertain and be entertained upon the Sabbath, which was her solitary day of leisure.

Ivy prepared tea presently and toasted some scones for her guest. She spoke with astounding impassivity at her task.

'Poor old Dick,' she said. 'It's strange to get to the cooking so quick and handy now, Susan, for his big armchair was ever in the way. I see 'em now in my mind's eye clear as clear. Him and his mother cluttering up the hearth one each side. Great talkers they were. They talkative people little know how trying they can be to us quiet ones.'

Miss Mingo permitted herself to be mildly shocked. She knew that Ivy would soon cease to be a customer and felt safe in the luxury of a retort.

'Well, well ; their poor tongues are still enough now,' she answered.

But Ivy was proof against reproof. She only smiled.

'Granny's nature was very ill to neighbour with. A grating woman she was. I never could like her,' she sighed.

'That won't make her turn in her grave, however,' answered the post-mistress somewhat tartly, and then changed the subject.

'When I think on your family, I always think on dear Mr.

Pye,' she said. 'The old one, not the young one, needless to say. Ah, Ivy, what a man he was ! And yet for all his wisdom, how little he knew what was going to happen to his money. Nobody ever do know for that matter and 'tis idle plotting and planning for it after you're took. We die, but our money goes on, if we've got any, and them that try to keep a grip on it from the grave must often be terrible disappointed to see the living at work.'

'He'd have been very well content to know what good uses Richard's money was going to be put to,' said Mrs. Challice.

'He might,' admitted Susan, who was still feeling hard, 'or, again, he might not. He always felt a great mistrust of human affairs—dear Mr. Pye did.'

THE END.

HIS MOTHER TO BABY JOHN.

*Blue eyes are yours, and warm cheeks pink from sleep ;
Your little hands tight-closed, as if—in play—
An angel gave you kisses there to keep
One in each hidden palm—the childish way.*

*No wealth have you but those short threads of gold
—Your silken hair : Your only armament
The Baby-Cupid's bow your soft lips hold ;
But rich and strong in love, rest you content.*

E. G. TEMPLE LANG.

Dublin.

MONACH.¹

BY ALASDAIR ALPIN MACGREGOR.

THE mysterious disappearance on Sunday, November 15, 1936, of two lightkeepers from the Monach or Shillay Lighthouse has done something at any rate to put on the map, so to write, a cluster of isles, the mere existence of which, hitherto, scarcely was known but to the very few families inhabiting them, to the West Highland lobster-fishermen residing upon them in rude huts of stone and turf during the summer months, to straying units of the great Scottish Herring Fleet, to those in the service of the Northern Lighthouse Board, and to the farers of sundry nations, who traverse the seas in ships.

To the tragedy that visited this remote fragment of the British Isles, we shall refer at a later stage.

Heiskeir and Monach, or the Monach Isles, are the names familiarly applied to a group of five, small, Hebridean islands lying out in the Atlantic Ocean, roughly four and a half miles to the south-west of Rudha Mòr, the headland in the Paible district of North Uist, and some eight miles due west of two islands stretching at no great distance from the western shore of North Uist and known as Baleshare and Illeray. The ocean between Monach and North Uist is uniformly shallow : from a small boat one can trace the sea's floor with the greatest ease throughout the entire distance, particularly, of course, when the channel is calm.

At varying intervals during the last five centuries the sea

¹ 'The Seven Hunters,' by the same author, was published in CORNHILL in January.

has made serious inroads in this neighbourhood. How far the Monach Isles themselves actually have been affected in this respect, it is not possible to say with any degree of accuracy. But many official documents show quite clearly that the sea has made several encroachments upon the lands on the west coast of North Uist, immediately opposite Monach. It is very probable, therefore, that the same marine denudation has been in operation in the case of these islands, though perhaps more gradually and imperceptibly. References to the Lost Continent, which is believed to have linked St. Kilda and the Monach Isles and the Seven Hunters with the main belt of the Outer Hebrides, are frequently found in the folk-tales of Monach. Allusions to the hunting-ground that intervened between North Uist and St. Kilda are common to the legendary of St. Kilda and of Harris. When I was staying on St. Kilda in the autumn of 1930, immediately prior to the evacuation of Hirta (the main island of the group and the only one that was inhabited), the natives on more than one occasion told me the legend of the warrior-woman, who hunted between Hirta and Harris, before the sea separated them. And, in confirmation of this, they assured me that stag antlers had been found on the summit of Oiseval, one of the highest peaks of Hirta !

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The Monach Isles comprise Stockay, Ceann Ear (East Head), Ceann Iar (West Head), Shivinish, and Shillay. The maximum length of the group is roughly five miles. Between Stockay, a barren skerry to the north-east, and Shillay, in the west, and upon which stands Shillay Lighthouse, are the three other low-lying islands already named—Ceann Ear, Shivinish, and Ceann Iar. At low water these three islands are accessible from one another. Shivinish, the islet situated between Ceann Ear and Ceann Iar, is really

a detached portion of Ceann Iar. It is fordable from Ceann Ear at half-tide. At ordinary high water, Shìvinish actually forms part of Ceann Iar, but not during the high spring-tides. In other words, during high water or low water, the Monach group consists of four islands, whereas during the high spring-tides it consists of five.

The Monach Isles, exclusive of Shìllay, have a total area of about 1,567 acres, in addition to a good landfall and a service croft at Claddach Kirkibost, on the mainland of North Uist. Ceann Ear is by far the largest of the group. Its greatest length is roughly two and three-quarter miles, its greatest breadth one and three-quarter miles. Its area is almost double that of Ceann Iar, the next island in order of size. Apart from Shìllay and the lighthouse people dwelling upon it, the entire population of Monach now resides in the village on Ceann Ear, many of the cottages of which to-day are tumbledown and uninhabited. The village includes a small mission-hall and a school. There are now no black houses on these islands. The population has dwindled to about twenty. A resident missionary meanwhile fulfils the functions both of teacher and pastor. Weather permitting, mails are conveyed regularly between the post-office at Bay-head, in North Uist, and Ceann Ear in a boat owned and sailed by a family of brothers living on Ceann Ear, who pasture black cattle, and cultivate a proportion of the soil in the neighbourhood of the village. Except where sandy bays and coves give way to rocks and storm-beaches, the main islands of Ceann Ear and Ceann Iar are composed of sandy soil, flat in places, but largely in the form of æolian sand-dunes covered over with bent, or machar-grass. Until about thirty-five years ago, Heiskeir was renowned for its bent-grass, of which were made such articles as mats, ropes, horse-collars, small poaching nets, and the heavy baskets and sacks

in which both the natives of the Monach Isles and of the parent Island of North Uist used to convey their cereals and meal to and from the mills. It is said that, so thickly pleated were the sacks made by the natives of Heiskeir bent, as to have been almost impervious to rain or spray. While sheltering in a barn on Kirkibost Island in the autumn of 1897, Erskine Beveridge watched bent ropes in process of manufacture. At that time Heiskeir supplied most of the raw material, though the inhabitants of North Uist were gradually developing a partiality for the bent growing on Kirkibost itself.

There are two lochans on Ceann Ear. The one, situated in the vicinity of the village, is known as *Loch nam Buaidh*, Loch of the Virtues. For centuries this small sheet of water was believed to be the haunt of the fearsome water-horse; and much of the folk-lore of these weird islands is devoted to the activities of this supernatural creature. The other lochan usually dries up entirely during summer drought. On Ceann Iar is the only noticeable hillock. It is called *Cnoc Mòr*, the Great Hillock; and I should imagine that it attains an altitude of not more than, say, sixty feet above sea-level. To-day, as I already have indicated, no one lives on Ceann Iar, although in years gone by crofters on Ceann Ear had seasonal dwellings on that island. However, one still may see a tenantless and tottering building on Ceann Iar, at a place called Croic. Erskine Beveridge, in his stupendous work on the archæology and topography of North Uist, which was published in 1911, refers to a large cattle-fold on Ceann Iar 'with a range of seven adjoining huts, these latter serving as temporary accommodation for the crofters of Ceann Ear.'

The area of Shivinish is small. This islet is joined to Ceann

Iar by an elevated spit of sand and a storm-beach which, as already mentioned, are fordable except during the high spring-tides. The channel between Cenn Iar and Shillay is roughly a third of a mile at its narrowest. It is shored by rocks, and is fairly deep—sufficiently deep, in any event, to permit of the passage of small sailing craft, and to enable the *Pharos* to anchor close at hand when effecting reliefs, or when replenishing coal and other supplies necessary for the maintenance of the Shillay Lighthouse station.

It is said that the name, Monach, originated with Shillay. In olden times Shillay was known by the Gaelic name, *Eilean nam Manach*, meaning Island of the Monks. On Blaeu's map the group is marked *Helskyr na Monich*. The present lighthouse on Shillay is believed to occupy the site of an ancient monastery. Moreover, it is held that on this very spot the monks of old used to maintain throughout the night a red beacon to warn the tall sailing ships and the chieftains' birlinns of danger, just as the lighthouse of to-day warns their successors.

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One of the most interesting references to the Monach Isles is to be sought in *The Clan Donald*. In 1692, the year after the Massacre of Glen Coe, Alexander MacDonald (*Alasdair Ban Mac Iain 'ic Uisdein*, to give this gentleman the name by which he was known to his own generation, and by which he still is known in the traditions of the Outer Isles) despatched his galley from Heiskeir to Ballachulish with a cargo of barley-meal to relieve the destitution among the remnant of the MacIans, who had escaped the vengeance of Robert Campbell of Glen Lyon and his felonious accomplices, and had returned from the refuge of the hills to their charred glen. MacDonald was the tacksman of Heiskeir at the time. His promptitude in rendering this assistance to his

clans-people is said to have saved them from starvation, and is still spoken of in the islands at the telling of tales round the peat fires in the long, winter evenings. That MacDonald was able to send forth such a cargo testifies to the fertility of the Monach Isles, which always have been regarded as among the most fertile of the Hebrides.

On Ceann Ear in 1886 there were eight crofter families and six cottar families, together with a teacher. The population then was seventy-five; and fine specimens of manhood the tenants were, I am told—big-boned, deep-chested, alert, and intelligent, few of them under six feet in height; and their island the abode of Highland hospitality. Owing to emigration to Canada, as also to migration to holdings on the main island of North Uist, the population has been reduced steadily, so that, at the time of writing, there is on Heiskeir a population of seventeen. This consists of three crofter families, one cottar, and the teacher-missionary.

Until roughly twenty years ago, the people used peat for fuel; and a grand sight it was to see the Monach fleet of smacks, ferrying the peats during fine weather in autumn. During August several boats belonging to these isles might have been seen lying off Dusary and Claddach Kyles, and at a place called Ardheiskeir. The peats were cast on the moor of Kyles Paible, on the west side of North Uist, and also on certain allotted bogs fringing both sides of the Committee Road, near Loch a' Charra. The Committee Road, by the way, is the name given in North Uist to the road running a distance of four miles between Malacleit and the Vallay Strand in the north, and Dusary in the south, and providing a short cut across the north-west portion of that island. It was constructed with a view to providing

employment during the potato famine about the year, 1846.

The inhabitants of the Monach Isles now burn coal, which they get by a boat coming periodically with supplies to the lighthouse on Shillay. The use of coal led to the introduction of a very convenient type of American stove.

The tenants of Monach always have been looked upon as among the most prosperous crofters in the Hebrides. In addition to lobster-fishing, kelp, and the making of tweed, these islands have been renowned for their black cattle and sheep—from the butcher's point of view, of course ! Until a decade or two ago, large quantities of tangle ash and stenophila kelp were produced ; but, owing to declining man-power, this very lucrative home industry has had to be abandoned, and no kelp has been exported since 1926, so far as I am aware. The kelp industry, however, is still struggling to exist on the mainland of North and of South Uist at fairly remunerative prices—struggling chiefly owing to the shortage of adequate labour.

It was in the days before the lighthouse was built on Shillay, though long before the monks had quitted its shores, that the natives of Monach were wont to pasture their sheep on that island. And there came a day—so the story has it—when most of the inhabitants, men and women, went over the Sound to the shearing of the sheep on Shillay. The men were not long at the shearing, however, when they succumbed to the temptation of raiding the seals on a tidal skerry in the neighbourhood. But they had failed to secure their boat properly, with the result that it had drifted well out of reach by the time that the flowing tide began to encroach seriously upon the skerry. Frantic with despair for the safety of their husbands were the Monach women, as they watched from Shillay the surging flood-tide encompassing the seal-

raiders on the skerry. Their piteous cries at length were heard by a woman on the opposite shore, who, unaided, launched the only boat available. But her effort was in vain : the tide had swept the men of Monach to their drowning, long ere she reached the skerry. And the folks of the Isles were convinced that this fatality was a judgment upon the people of Monach, since they believed the seals to be human beings, under enchantment. The Seal-folk, in fact, are emissaries from the Courts of the Kings of Lochlann, under spell.

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Some years ago, when staying at Lochmaddy, I set out for the West Side, past West Ford Inn and Claddach Kyles and Claddach Kirkibost, and eventually arrived at a tiny place called Bayhead. There I diverted from the main island road, and lingered through the wild flowers about Balmore and Knockantorran until I came to the shore at Maskeir. Away out in the Atlantic lay the Monach Isles ; and I was dreaming among the long, waving bent-grass and the grass-hoppers, when I discerned the Monach boat afar off, making for the customary landing-place among the rocks at Maskeir. It was a boat with only one mast and a fairly large sail—only one mast, I remark, because the Monach boats usually are distinguished by their having two masts, each designed to carry a canvas somewhat smaller than the canvas associated with a single-masted boat of similar draught and dimensions. The Monach seamen maintain (or certainly used to maintain) that, in the event of a squall falling upon them during the passage between Port Roy and North Uist, they can handle with greater skill and confidence a boat having two masts and two smallish sails.

All the world was radiant with warmth and sunshine. Upon a still sea rested the Mountains of South Uist. Away

to the right of them lay the Barra Isles, seen as if through a purple gauze separating faeryland from the full gaze of the eyes of men, Barra itself and Mingulay of the Bird dwarfing the other islands associated with them. And, then to the east of me was the Island of Benbecula, and the Great North Ford that at this range appeared to run up to the base of the mountain called Eaval. Far beyond, and without the faintest vestige of a cloud upon them, were the Coolins of Skye. Out over the Atlantic one discerned quite plainly the three main islands of St. Kilda—Boreray, Hirta, and Dùn—with the steep precipices of Conachair and the Bìoda Mòr.

The Heiskeir boat continued to approach at a steady pace with a windless canvas. Every now and then, she was completely obscured by the reefs lying offshore, and passed by her on her course to Maskeir. I knew how long it would be ere she set sail again for Port Roy, on Ceann Ear, since the Monach men had several matters to attend to on the mainland shore, and a certain amount of cargo to take aboard.

While they were wandering leisurely through the fields to the post-office at Bayhead, I also took to wandering, and came upon a cart-track winding through the machar, where in places the wheel-ruts lie hidden by wild flowers to the extent of more than eighteen inches—so overgrown is this track in summer-time. The cart-track led me to a tiny homestead at Paiblesgarry, encircled by hayricks galore, and corn half-ripe. Here I asked for food, since hunger was now upon me, and I had tramped many a good Highland mile that day to reach the West Side and the Heiskeir ferry. Soon I returned from Paiblesgarry to the shore. There I found a flat-bottomed dinghy drawn up among the rocks, ready to convey me out to the Monach boat, lying about fifty yards offshore, and on the point of weighing anchor

for Ceann Ear. I stepped aboard, and in a few minutes less than an hour disembarked at the landing-stage among the rocks at Port Roy. When sailing in by Stockay, we overhauled a small boat containing three Uist fishermen, who were drawing in flounders on lines with greater rapidity than the disciples ever did on the Sea of Galilee in the days of the miracles. The sandy sea-floor off the Monach Isles, especially the stretch between Ceann Ear and North Uist, abounds in flounders. A native informed me that, on a line of 400 hooks, he often had caught as many as 360 within a couple of hours. Seals without number were swimming around the skerries on every side of us, quite heedless of our proximity.

The day was calm and warm. Lobster-fishermen belonging to Grimsay and Benbecula had just come ashore from visiting their pots, and were lying half-asleep on the scented grass above the shore, their boats meanwhile riding at anchor or to moorings in the sunlit harbour of Port Roy. Grimsay Isle, I should mention, is renowned for its boat-building. Indeed, nearly all the Monach boats, and the boats in which the lobster-fishermen visit these shores, have been constructed on that island. The boat in which the natives pass to and fro between Heiskeir and West Ford Inn or Maskeir was built at Kallin, on Grimsay; and a fine boat she is. Kallin is approximately twenty miles from Port Roy.

I walked along the path leading among the cultivated fields of Ceann Ear to the house of the MacDonalds, where I was to sojourn. And I confess that, in all my experience of the Outer Hebrides, I never have seen better corn and barley and potato crops than here. Small wonder Heiskeir has been reputed for its fertility. Thigh-deep, I lingered through acres of wild flowers and clover, among bees and butterflies and moths that will be loving the profusion of this

Hebrid Isle in time of summer or autumn. In ways Ceann Ear reminds me strangely of Vatersay, one of the Barra Isles. Here, as on Vatersay, one finds ragged robin and wild thyme vetch and orchid and lady's-smock, knapweed and silverweed, harebell and bird's-foot trefoil, each one of them competing with his fellow-flowers for the best place in the sun.

There is an ancientness about this lone fragment of Scotland, an atmosphere old-world and mellow. On Ceann Ear, at the downgoing of the sun, you will be seeing an old woman with a shawl wrapped round her head, her cheeks weather-tanned ; and she lingering in her footless stockings from the houses and through the pastures of the island toward the rocks skirting the west shore, carrying a couple of pails. Watch her closely for a moment, and you will see her disappear among the rocks, for the island well lies hidden by the boulders of æons, and just within a few feet of high-tide mark. The problem of good, fresh water, I was told, is a difficult one on Ceann Ear in a dry season ; but the island, for all that, is by no means deficient in springs, judging by the marshy and mossy spots here and there. It ought to be possible to find a plenteous supply of drinking water on Ceann Ear.

The Benbecula and Grimsay lobster-fishermen erect turf and stone huts for themselves on the Monach Isles. These they inhabit from the end of April till late in September. One of their number told me that during the summer months they despatch to an agent at Lochmaddy as many as thirty dozen lobsters at a time, and that in winter they send them direct to London. He boasted to me that the lobsters are always alive when they reach their destination.

¹ See *Summer Days among the Western Isles*, pp. 165-88.

While strolling through the orchids and the bird's-foot trefoil, I chanced to fall in with the island missionary, who informed me that the total population of these islands was twenty-two, and that this number was dwindling steadily. At that time, all the inhabitants were MacDonald to name. Eight or ten children attended the village school to be taught by the missionary himself. To-day only five houses of the village are inhabited : several of the remainder now are quite uninhabitable. But there is ample room on Heiskeir for a greater population. Another couple of families would make things considerably easier for the rest, especially in co-operative tasks, such as the unloading of Cunningham's puffer, when she arrives at Port Roy with a cargo of coal.

A few years ago a small jetty was constructed among the rocks at Port Roy. At high water this jetty is completely submerged. What, then, is the use of it ? you may enquire. Well, it was built to facilitate the shipment of cattle destined for the mainland of North Uist by the island boat. The cattle are shipped a couple of hours or so before high tide, so that, when the boat reaches the other side, either at Maskeir or at West Ford Inn, the tide is full. The same procedure is followed when bringing cattle over to Heiskeir. They are shipped at high water, and arrive at Port Roy with the ebb, just as the jetty is beginning to show above the water. Thank God for this slight improvement, since few have any conception of what animals suffer in transport in the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

The Monach folks can tell you everything about the elements ; and, indeed, some of them still calculate the hour of day by moon and tide and sun. And they say that, if a new moon be visible within three days of her birth, the Hebrides are sure to be visited by a spell of bad weather.

Sometimes the inhabitants of Ceann Ear can manage two visits to North Uist in a day, if the tides be suitable. This they always endeavour to do when transporting cattle or sheep. In winter the sheep on Ceann Iar are sent over to Ceann Ear, while the cattle, that throughout the summer months graze on Ceann Ear, are transferred to Ceann Iar. Although the ford is passable at low tide, even in winter, the cattle seem to find no inducement to wander back to Ceann Ear until spring-time, when water begins to run short on Ceann Iar and the grass tends to lose its succulence.

The Heiskeir folks tell me, further, that their calves will drink anything, though until fairly recently the rearing of calves on Monach was regarded as being almost impossible, owing to what was believed to have been the unsuitability of the water of these islands. By way of showing how the calves have adapted themselves to their environment, the natives boast that the calves now reared on Heiskeir will drink even a pail-ful of broth !

They tell me on Heiskeir that sea-spoil is often cast ashore on Ceann Ear, but not so often as on the strands of Baleshare and Kirkibost, which appear to be more favourably situated from the point of view of driftwood and the like washed up by wind and tide. Some years ago, a timber vessel came to grief in the Sound of Harris ; and great quantities of yellow pine from her were washed ashore on the western seaboard of Ceann Ear. But I understand that in recent years very little of any value has come ashore at the Monach Isles.

With the exception of the schoolhouse, which faces north, all the houses on Ceann Ear, inhabited and uninhabited, face east, and look out toward the mainland of North Uist and toward Benbecula. So, too, does the small mission-hall, with its red corrugated roof. This means that little sunlight

enters by doors and windows. I asked the reason for this uniform orientation, and was informed that it is best suited to prevailing winds and storms—‘The winter won’t be so strong on the door’ was the explanation given me by Alasdair MacDonald, at whose house I resided. Not infrequently are the Monach Isles visited by storms, and swept by gales and high seas. I was told that a few years ago the violence of the tempest brought the waves so far inland that the natives took fright, and actually forsook their dwellings on Ceann Ear for the few elevated spots on the island. This experience, I believe, engendered among them at the time a desire to evacuate the Monach group in favour of crofts on the mainland of North Uist. One can appreciate their anxiety in such circumstances, for these islands are proverbially low-lying, and there is no telephonic nor telegraphic communication between them and the outer world when the Atlantic raps ponderously at their doors.

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When, on the morrow, I crossed over to Ceann Iar at ebb-tide, the sun was beating on the tall dunes, giving one the impression of having wandered far from the islands into the interior of Culbin, Scotland’s great tract of desert country. In the Sound of Shillay, the channel then dividing me from the island on which the lighthouse stands, lobster-fishermen belonging to Grimsay heartlessly pursued their calling from a boat scarcely visible among the dusken reefs at low water. Eager to ferry the Sound, I hailed the Grimsay men. In a moment they rowed themselves clear of the skerries, hoisted sail, and made for the rock on which I was standing, the tide swirling in about my ankles, and my toes gripping the fresh, glistening sea-wrack for fear of slipping. (Two things there are in particular that make me feel the meaning of freedom. One is the act of squeezing through a fence, or

louping a drystane dyke : the other is the getting of my feet on wet sea-wrack.)

Before long I was on the jetty of Shillay, scanning the narrows, and picturing to myself the manner in which a puffer, bringing a cargo of coal to the lightkeepers, is allowed to drift broadside on, with ropes at stern and stern slung through rings on the rocks by the shore. The lighthouse relief boat lies off here at various intervals, when unloading supplies of food and fuel, or when the Northern Lighthouse Commissioners visit Shillay by the *Pharos*, on their biennial jaunt of inspection at the public expense.

On Shillay I was entertained by Lightkeeper Robertson and his wife, who were not long in setting me down to an ample repast. As there are no cows on Shillay, the lighthouse folks stationed on the island obtain their milk supply from a couple of goats. I doubt how long the limited pasture of Shillay could sustain a cow with a normal appetite, for in winter-time even the few sheep pastured on it are obliged to eke out their diet by feeding on dulse.

Before I quitted Shillay, the lighthousemen gave me a few minutes' entertainment with their wireless ; and I listened to the B.B.C. Dance Band as distinctly as though I had been reclining upon my magenta divan in Chelsea, and my next-door neighbour's loud-speaker had been booming out upon the square. Fancy this on Shillay ! Fancy this on a lone rock out in the Atlantic—a rock where, until a few years ago, no music was ever heard but the music of the elements at war, and that of the singing seals !

THE SEEKER.

BY DORIS N. CLARK.

THE slim dark youth paced restlessly up and down outside the theatre. Now and again he stopped to watch some man passing by, stopped and gazed with an air of one who makes mental notes. Now and again he was called upon to perform some odd task or pass the time of day with one of the workmen for ever coming and going about the theatre. People looked at him curiously from time to time. He was simply dressed and obviously poor, but in spite of his accent which proclaimed him country bred and unused to the town there was an air of culture about him—the culture that comes from meeting and conversing with one's fellow-men. He might have been a prince playing at pauper for a day, happy in the knowledge that when the day was over he would once more return to his natural surroundings.

But he was restless. It was several weeks now since he had come to London expecting to find the streets paved with gold and its air filled with the music of great men's words. He had found the music of men's words, but they were the words of humble men—his fellow-workers and the men about the theatre. He still longed for greatness.

He sighed. It was spring now and at home the woods would be turning green and the year would be reawakening. And there would be daffodils—'daffodils that come before the swallow dares, and take the winds of March with beauty.' He repeated it to himself. They were lovely words. William Shakespeare knew how to write.

He stopped in his stride as if he had come to a decision. He thought hard. Was it for this he had come to London—to wait outside a theatre at everyone's beck and call? He had risked everything—sacrificed safety and beauty and contentment—for this! 'Daffodils that come before the swallow dares——' He laughed. He could do better than that. If only they would listen to him. At present they laughed at him—a country lad with a lot of high ambitions, and there were University men about who had received years of education and culture and yet could get not hearing. The theatre was no place for him, they had told him—except outside. But he meant to show them.

'Lad,' a familiar voice called him—the manager. 'Hold my horse, lad.'

His moment had come: 'Sir, I hold no horses. I am an actor.'

'An actor, begad. And where do you play, master actor?'

'I could play with your players, sir, if you would have me. And I can write your plays too.'

'A writer into the bargain! And what plays will you give us—stories of love and hate and murder in sonorous metre?'

'I write of human beings.'

'Poor stuff, master writer, poor stuff.'

'We are such stuff as dreams are made on.'

'Well answered, Will Shakespeare. For that one line I'll take thee.'

He beckoned to a youth across the street:

'Hold my horse, lad. Come, Will, we'll see thee an actor yet.'

VOICES FROM OLD FURROWS.

BY W. J. BLYTON.

ABOUT the time of Shakespeare's birthday, the family festival of the Coronation, the miracle of another spring on the ploughlands, and the centenary of John Constable, master of English landscape, it chanced that, *via* FitzGerald's letters from Woodbridge and Crabbe on his Aldeburgh coast, I came again upon a queer little book I have inherited—printed long before Waterloo, the battle of the Nile or the retreat from Moscow—Bloomfield's *Rural Tales and Ballads*, drenched in time past and in the spirit of that somnolent countryside.

Five inches by three, with tiny type and period woodcuts, it was published by a Charles Daly, bound by a W. S. Clarke of Dorking, and contains not only the original preface by the noted Capell Lofft (a personage in his day—an odd, classical Suffolk squire who named his oaks Homer, Æschylus, Plato, Socrates, Milton) but a memoir by the poet's brother George. It is as interesting to handle as its shelf-neighbours, the Jacob Tonson edition of Mr. Dryden's Virgil with its fantastic woodcuts, or old Somerville's *Chase*, or the first edition of the lectures on poetry by Wm. Hazlitt, Esq., 'at the Surrey Institution' in Waterloo year, or the 1815 edition of Wordsworth's early poems with drawings by Sir George Beaumont. In Hanoverian times, long before Queen Victoria was even born, our forefathers had a passion for these diminutive, dumpy books; and (in theory at any rate) took brook-side rambles with such nonpareil reprints of Bacon, Cowley, Pepys, Defoe, Mandeville, John Ray the

naturalist, Boswell's *Johnson*, Gray's letters, White's *Selborne*, *Spectator* and *Rambler* papers, or Thomson's *Seasons*; of which last work my copy, 'printed for Hopper & Son, Market Street Lane, Manchester, by Mark Wardle' about 1780 is Bloomfield's rival for typographical and pictorial piquancy. They were prefaced usually by anonymous, painstaking Lives of 'the bard,' telling where 'our author received the rudiments of his education' and the 'local gentlemen' who were first to be interested in his 'effusions.'

Bloomfield was befriended well by Capell Lofft and the Duke of Grafton; his fellow-peasant, Clare, a few miles away, by sixteen peers (all duly named in my Northamptonshire life of him); Crabbe (another East Anglian) by Burke, the Duke of Rutland and others. It does seem that patrons such as these were not 'patronising' but the soul of tact, sometimes brotherly without a trace of condescension. Democracy has not produced a more human relation between the prosperous ungifted and the poor man temporarily visited by the god. It lets him sell his wares through an agent; and, in its own virile idiom, 'sink or swim.' Sometimes a publisher was princely. Thus Mr. John Murray in 1819 gave Crabbe 'the munificent sum of £3,000' for *The Tales of the Hall* and the remaining copyright of his previous poems. Moore says: 'When he received the bills for £3,000 we (Moore and Rogers the poets) earnestly advised that he should deposit them in safe hands; but no, he "must take them with him to Troubridge and show them to his son John. Otherwise at home they would hardly believe in his luck."' At Salisbury, Mr. Everett (a banker) repeated the suggestion, with a like result. It is not too much to say that this £3,000 equals £8,000 or £9,000 in our day. Whitaker, the first begetter of the *Almanack*, bought up all of Clare he could lay hands on at

more of a bargain price. Bloomfield had the perfect boomster Lofft to look after his interests. Johnson's terrific letter to Chesterfield does eighteenth- and nineteenth-century patrons less than justice. The higher bourgeoisie and country gentry have not been at all bad friends to the struggling Muse ; and they were as good to Turner and to Constable as these independent-minded painters would let them be.

Ours is a very knowing, preoccupied time of book clubs and circles, which, with radio talks on new books, and newspaper reviews, tell the man in the Tube what he need not read and what he simply must. They would probably give you to understand that Cowper, Thomson, Dyer, Hood, Bloomfield and a dozen others are negligible, the great Unread : a great relief to thousands of their true believers who are interested in short cuts. But to save time is often to miss pleasure. The byways are good to loiter in. We must not be intimidated by great names, in literature or its critics. One whom 'Christopher North,' W. H. Hudson and Edmund Blunden have praised can safely be enjoyed without loss of caste or modernity. Huge *réclame* has (rightly) grown round the words of Blake, Shelley, Keats and, in our own day, Mr. Yeats ; appreciation of them is delivered as the sign of the illuminated. But it is not the only sign. Being fashionable, such appreciation can, unfortunately, be simulated ; and sometimes it is, painfully. But if a man tells me he tastes some exquisite bouquet in Gray's or Cowper's letters—in FitzGerald's or Lamb's ; that he sees something in the 'flat' parts of Wordsworth, despite the remarks of the aesthetes ; and that he spends time (more than he strictly ought) over some minor neglected poets—this is a touchstone of his literary genuineness. He is not stoking up in preparation for a literary 'at home' in a suburban *salon*. The reader whose taste rings sincerely is he who is, as it were,

fearlessly and innocently a little 'behind the times'; has an obstinate unborrowed prejudice or two; knows the masterpieces, but will not be bullied by them any more than by this week's 'novel of genius'; who admires eagles and birds of paradise but will not have his ear spoiled for the few trite notes of the sparrow and the reed-warbler. Equally it is evidence of originality when a person deliberately prefers sand-dune, marsh, 'the level waste, the rounding grey,' to the Trossachs, the Dolomites or the Apennines. His nature-sense is keener than that of the colour-hunters; it needs less violent stimulus. The same is true of writers. Of two fine works, their art being equal, that is the greater which has the less garish subject. This is what makes the subtle, transfiguring genius of Tennyson, Crabbe and others more remarkable in a way than the gorgeous effects of a Turner or a Shelley. Many of us prefer the neat intimate realisms of Gilbert White in his diary of a parish to the romantic prose of Ruskin in the Alps—glimpses of the lodges of England, bridle paths and stile tracks footed by the last labourer, to pyrotechnic sunsets over Venice.

All this explains why a few readers who revere their Virgil, depicting 'tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd,' and know the nature-touch of Shakespeare or Wordsworth, Keats or Hardy—have still a place in their heart for 'the Farmer's Boy' and his Suffolk home. The critical oracles will say it does not signify that this old Suffolk work is unique in our literature, in this—that no one else has done in poetry (and few in prose either) the whole life of a farm from year to year in one extended view. But to some it does signify. It belongs to the Husbandry of dear, slow England before farmers and landowners in the early eighteenth century had even *exported* food! Bloomfield in his lesser pieces depicts Scottish drovers passing through our fat,

sleeping shires—a French mariner from a wreck and battle on the high seas, begging among the peasantry—the rough and ready methods of the unspecialised, versatile land-workers—a farmer's 'horkey' or feast—a country hiring and fair—the local agrarian power the Duke of Grafton at Euston through whose glades 'Giles untaught and unrepining strayed' without rebuke from keeper or ranger.

It is all 'long and merry ago'; and 'the unimaginable touch of time' has given these old humanities and dignities a gracious something which can only live in literature, the charmed memory of the race. These dear ancients and provincials are one with the Mellstock Choir, the Wessex Waits, the dairy folk of Talbot Hays; Shallow and Slender recalling the price of ewes at Stamford Fair. Plainly it was an uncompetitive England. Russian and American wheat were not poured hither; nor Chinese and Egyptian eggs; nor Danish bacon and butter; nor foreign dried milk, Argentine beef, and potatoes from Jersey, tomatoes from Guernsey, and early greens from France with onions from Spain and Portugal. Britain was mainly its own orchard and back garden and stockyard; importing chiefly exotics, such as tobacco, wine, lemons, spices and perfumes. Far more of it was, proportionately, cultivated. If some owners and farmers were task-masters, they were at least land-proud—as were their workers, with all their long hours and their diet of suet dumpling, bacon, beans, and vegetable broth. Lives were then lived of which it is touchingly true to say (despite the occasionally shrewdly felt pinch) that they illustrated 'holy poverty.' Gay's 'bowzy-boy' existed; so did Burns's cottar. *Sancta simplicitas* dwelt in the states-men's homes in Wordsworth-land, sacred home-feeling clung to Scottish crofts; and the one-storey Dorset or South-English cottage was the very symbol of peace to

many an inarticulate labourer as he footed the path home in the darkling afternoon. It was a brief interval when work on the soil was a good way of life, as well as a frugal livelihood ; a phase better than the distresses of a century and more earlier, better than the later exodus from green England into the Smoke. The S.P.C.K. and others printed cheap little books for cottars, and these found a ready sale when chapmen and colporteurs hawked them through the shire—his book pack was as familiar a sight in the lanes as the reddle-man, tinker, knife-grinder, pedlar, or vagrant. One of many such is before me as I write : *Sketches of Rural Affairs*, by a Mrs. Charles Tomlinson, expounding soundly (and piously) for the rustic the plough ; the Seed-lip, the harrow, ‘and England’s Resources in Time of Dearth’ ; the fold, dairy, hayfield, sickle, flail, poultry-yard, orchard, fence, and water-course. Neat wood engravings serve as chapter-headings, and Bishop Mant’s *British Months* are freely quoted, as are the Scriptures against *Sloth* ; and it is insisted from time to time (in italics) that a *ploughman has many good reasons to be contented and happy* in the station God has placed him in. This fine old matron of the Farm is no Addison, poetising from outside—

*O how fresh the morning air !
 Charming fresh the morning air !
 When the Zephirs and the heifers
 Their odoriferous breath compare,
 Their odoriferous breath compare.*

(Exeunt, singing) ! She knows the job, and is writing for people who know it and wish to improve at it. When money and gentry forsook country for town, when brains left it for steam and brick, naturally those old homes in the by-lanes often became tumbledown and insanitary ; but they

need not be, so long as a vigorous agricultural life supports a rural polity.

Bloomfield, like scores of other cottagers who made their mark, by day lived in wide spaces of air, quiet, and light, with the aboriginal smells and primeval sights round him ; by night, in lamplight (between calls of duty) spelling out some educative volume and getting what Wordsworth called 'a strong bookmindedness.' *As an existence*, it compares favourably with being pushed, as by hydraulic pressure, into an overcrowded Tube train hardly in time to 'Mind the doors !' at the crush hour. When his widowed mother put the boy in charge of her older son, 'she charged me,' he says, 'as I valued a mother's blessing, to watch over him, to set good examples for him, and never to forget that he had lost his father.' Family pride flourished in these damp little homes—possibly more than in the artisans' enormous block of flats. The life of the farmer's boy was 'constant, cheerful servitude' ; the fields his study, Nature was his book. He describes the first ploughing—

*The work is done : no more to man is given ;
The grateful farmer trusts the rest to heaven.
Yet oft with anxious heart he looks around
And marks the first green blade that breaks the ground ;
In fancy sees his trembling oats uprun,
His tufted barley yellow in the sun.*

Another boy is put to rook-scaring, like Jude the Obscure :

*And when at daybreak summoned from his bed,
Light as the lark that carolled o'er his head—
His sandy way, deep-worn by hasty showers,
O'er-arched with oaks that formed fantastic bowers
Waving aloft their towering branches proud
In borrowed tinges from the eastern cloud,
Gave inspiration pure as ever flowed,*

and he sings with the birds or imitates their calls. Returning he is told by the dairy-maid to call the cows—

*sedate and slow,
The right of conquest all the law they know,*

and they are milked out of doors under the elms. Churning feeding the pigs and poultry, chopping firewood, and cleaning up take up his morning. Suffolk cheese a century and a half ago was made only from skim, and wits said it was 'so hard that pigs grunt at it, dogs bark at it, but none dare bite it.' Bloomfield's version is :

*Its fame abroad by every tongue is spoke,
The well-known butt of many a flinty joke.*

The fault is London's ; London took the shire's cream and butter.

*Dairy produce throngs the eastern road ;
Delicious veal, and butter every hour
From Essex lowlands and the banks of Stour ;
And further far, where numerous herds repose,
From Orwell's brink, from Waveney or Ouse,
Hence Suffolk dairy-wives run mad for cream,
And leave their milk with nothing but its name.
To cheese converted, what can be its boast ?
What, but the common virtues of a post ?*

Cheshire and the Vale of Severn, he adds, refused thus to 'turn the mead's sweet nectar into stone.'

Meanwhile,

*On airy downs the idling shepherd lies
And sees to-morrow in the marbled skies,*

until summer, when the countryman 'views the future with the present hours, and looks for failures as he looks for showers' and thinks of his hay store well ahead, his roof

and kale ; sees the nodding wheat-ear with its milky-kernels taking a brown tinge from the sun. The youngster is Nature's darling ; to him, in quiet places, the mighty Mother unveils her face—

*And with one ray his infant soul inspires,
Just kindling there her never-dying fires,
Whence solitude derives peculiar charms
And Heaven-directed thought his bosom warms.*

Imagine the nostalgia with which the uprooted Bloomfield wrote that in the city garret in Bell Alley, Coleman Street—for London got him, as it got so many other strugglers, and slowly mumbled him in its giant jaws. Absence from the home fields was provocation, and many a good thing has been written for the sake of escape. He sees the self of years ago lying in the herbage, staring at the maturing corn, 'a glorious sight if glory dwells below,' and valued for itself more than for its cash equivalent. For no farmer worth his salt (in my experience of fellow-farmers) would prefer £60 from the N.F.U. insurance department for a destroyed stack to £50 worth of the same corn or hay safely housed or thatched. The medium he works in matters : his is an art, not all a trade, a way of life as well as a gruelling livelihood.

After some Teniers-like touches in the stockyard, comes the Fall :

*Again the year's decline, midst storms and floods,
The thundering chase, the yellow fading woods.
It comes ; and roaring woods obedient wave.*

We hear sheep-bells in the clean wind, the wild duck, the roosting pheasant's staccato cry, the bell clapping from the squat tower of a church which had a straw roof and was

environed by dock, mallow, and nettle, and nested in by grey-capped daws. All days 'slide by amid the unfinished toil of husbandry,' and in winter we see the night meal in the old shapeless farm kitchen, hams hanging with onions from the curved beams.

His Suffolk was before the industrial revolution which gave away many of our primary crafts to foreigners. Like Essex, Kent, the Cotswolds, Wilts, Oxfordshire, the West Country and the northern dales, it was graziers' country, home of woolstaplers and weavers like Thomas Betson and Thomas Paycocke, who built those churches of Lynn, Saffron Walden, Thaxted, Long Melford and Snettisham, those bourgeois homes and inns that bore fine carving outside—floral designs, trade-marks, family crests and a text in Latin or old English. At Norwich, Ipswich, Sudbury and Colchester and all the villages was heard the spinning-wheel or rough loom. Pack-horses paused from habit by the Fleece, the Woolpack, the Wain, or Staplers' Arms. As Fuller said, 'This county is charactered like Bethsheba, "She layeth her hand to the spindle and her hands hold the distaffe": it will not be amiss to pray that the Plough may go along and the wheel around, that so (being fed by the one and clothed by the other) there may be, by God's blessing, no danger of starving in our nation.' A sturdy provincialism did not apologise for itself: the scholar Capell Lofft in this book speaks of dialect 'which even well-educated persons in Suffolk and Norfolk do not avoid; and which may be said, as to general custom, to have become in those shires an established thing.'

A like exile in town drew out the rural impressions in Shakespeare's mind, of course with greater subtlety. He did not make up those vivid rustic conversations—he reported and remembered them. Davy the factotum, while his

master Shallow receives the 'man of war' Falstaff, fusses round : ' Shall we sow the headlands with wheat ? ' ' Aye,' answers the self-important gentleman-farmer, ' with red wheat, Davy, with red wheat.' ' And, sir, here is the smith's note for shoeing, and plough irons . . . Sir, a new link to the bucket must needs be had . . . And, sir, do you mean to stop any of William's wages, about the sack he lost the other day at Hinckley fair ? ' I can vouch for it that such talk goes on in many a farmhouse this day, as four or five hundred years ago. As the little Bloomfield, so the great Shakespeare, felt the pull of the furrows, saw ' the sunburnt sicklemen, of August weary,' the pole-clipt hop-field, the singing ' between the acres of the rye,' ' the white sheet bleaching on the hedge,' the ' rich leas of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats and pease ' ; the chat about prices, ' How a yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair ? . . . how a score of ewes now ? ' ' A score of ewes may be worth ten pounds.'

He hearkened to drovers in the inn yard at ' four by the day—Charles's wain is over the chimney top ' : and Tom the ostler being told to ' beat Cut's saddle, put a few flocks in the point ; the poor jade is wrung in the withers . . . Peas and beans are as dank here as a dog, enough to give them the bots. This house is turned upside down since Robin ostler died. Poor fellow ! never joyed since the price of oats rose : it was the death of him.'

Shakespeare liked to watch ' the breathless housewife churn,' to join in ' shepherd's homely curds, his cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,' grieved to see ' summer corn by tempest lodged,' laughed to see ' a fat and bean-fed horse neighing like a filly foal.' And at night he was very content, ' while spurs the belated traveller to gain the timely inn,' while ' light thickens, and the crow makes wing to the rooky wood,' to hear ' the heavy ploughman snore, all with

weary task foredone ' while he watched ' through the house
a glimmering light by the dead and drowsy fire,' and

*The cat with eyne of burning coal
Now couches 'fore the mouse's hole ;
And crickets sing at the oven's mouth
All the blither for their drouth ;*

and there is ' no din but snores the house about,' and ' the
bat hath flown his cloistered flight ' or ' the beetle with his
drowsy hum.'

He had the countryman's sentiment of the ' auld hoose ' with its nocturnal stirs and whisperings, as of fairies ' following darkness like a dream.' His matchless dream-faculty had deep play by the old chimney-corner. After all, peasant blood ran in him. There exist bills to show that he bought hay : I hope and believe he took a few handfuls, felt and smelt them critically, and watched how his animals savoured it. Anyway, my agricultural mind finds references in his work to sheep-shearing, stabling, harnessing, forage, clover leys, enclosure, ploughing, shepherding, reaping, snaring, and games like ' more sacks to the mill ' and ' nine men's morris.'

The earth of Shakespeare is a good earth, and bears good fruit—even the apple called man. There are bits of it left, immune from petrol pumps, arterial roads, flats, electricity pylons and advertisement hoardings. But like his martlet, it lives on sufferance, and ' builds in the weather on the outward wall, even in the force and road of casualty.'

WHEN GEORGE IV VISITED IRELAND.

BY H. MONTGOMERY HYDE.

THE recent royal visit to Ireland recalls the State Visit paid by King George IV shortly after his Coronation in 1821. This monarch was the first of the present dynasty to set foot in that part of his kingdom ; and, paradoxical as this may appear, he was accorded a magnificent reception by the Irish people.

Among those who accompanied him was the Foreign Secretary, the Marquess of Londonderry, better known as Lord Castlereagh. This statesman recorded his impressions of the journey in a series of striking letters to his wife. With the exception of part of one of them, none of these letters has been previously published, and the thanks of the present writer are due to their owner, the Marquess of Lothian, and to the Marquess of Londonderry, for permission to quote from them in the following account.

King George IV's visit to Ireland took place two months after his Coronation. On July 31, 1821, His Majesty set out from Carlton House for Portsmouth, where he arrived the same day and immediately embarked on his own 'yatch' (as he spelled it), the *Royal George*.

It took this vessel nearly a week to make Holyhead, where it had been arranged that Lord Londonderry and the other ministers in attendance upon the King should join the party. Here a further delay was occasioned by the news of

Queen Caroline's fatal illness, which necessitated several changes in the arrangements. Progress was also impeded by contrary winds which nearly determined the King to continue the voyage in one of the new steam packets.

For a royal yacht the accommodation provided by the *Royal George* was modest enough even for those times. She was a sailing vessel of some 340 tons and had been built in 1817 at Deptford dockyard from a design by Sir Henry Peake, one of the surveyors of the navy. 'The quarter deck of this royal yacht scarcely exceeded in decoration that of one of our own crack frigates : ' so runs a contemporary description. 'The King's dining cabin is a room about twenty-three feet wide and full seventeen feet deep. A door, opposite to that by which we had entered, conducted us through a passage about three and a half feet wide and seven feet and a half long to the King's state cabin or drawing-room, which we supposed to be about twenty feet wide and fifteen or sixteen deep. To the left of the passage, entered by a door from the state cabin, was the King's bedchamber, measuring about thirteen feet one way and the length of the passage the other. The ceiling was about six feet and a half from the deck, and the royal apartments, though richly and tastefully fitted up, did not appear to contain a single superfluous piece of furniture.'

Whilst waiting for further news of the Queen, His Majesty paid a visit to his friend Lord Anglesey, whose place, Plasnewydd, was close by. Next day he returned to Holyhead, where he was met by Lord Londonderry.

In the three following letters the Foreign Secretary describes what happened at Holyhead down to the time the royal yacht eventually left for Ireland on August 12. His wife Emily, to whom the letters are addressed, was a daughter of John, second Earl of Buckinghamshire.

' Royal Yatch.

Thursday, 2 p.m.

[9th August, 1821.]

Dearest Em,

The Messenger with the news of the Queen's death arrived an hour since and returned forthwith.

I write merely a line to say the King has embargoed me and ordered me to proceed with him to Dublin. We shall cross as soon as we can. His Excellency will be quite Private, and He will remain in retirement at the Park, till the time comes for his shewing himself.

Don't think us both mad if we should go over in a Steam Boat.

God bless you,

L.'

' Holyhead,

Royal George,

10th August, 1821.

My dearest Em,

We are still here wind-bound. The weather very bad and no prospect of moving to-day. The Queen has been very kind in ordering her remains to Brunswick, and making W. Austen her Heir. The King has been very reasonable in lending himself to every proper arrangement on this occasion, and bears his Good fortune with great propriety.

I am very comfortably lodg'd on board of this Yatch and slept sound last night notwithstanding the noise and the hardness of my bed . . . '

' Holyhead,

Royal George,

11th Aug. 12 o'clock.

We are still wind-bound, my Dearest Em, but I regret it the less, as the King is decorously quiet here, and when we get over

Paddy will be well drill'd to let His Majesty go peaceably to the Park for the proper number of days before he makes his public appearance.

H.M. dined with us yesterday, and was in good health and spirits, longing however to get over.'

About three o'clock in the afternoon of August 12 the *Royal George* was sighted some distance off the harbour of Dunleary, which the authorities had already decided to rename Kingstown in honour of the occasion. On landing at the pier an hour and a half later, His Majesty was given a rousing welcome by the crowds which had been lining the shore from early morning. Among the spectators the King recognised several old friends. One of them, Mr. Dennis Bowes Daly, was in the very act of shaking hands with His Majesty when he had the misfortune to be deprived of his pocket-book and a watch valued at sixty guineas.

As he stepped into his carriage George turned round and acknowledged the cheers which rent the air on all sides. 'God bless you all,' he said fervently. 'I thank you from my heart.'

The royal cavalcade then drove through Dublin to the Viceregal Lodge in Phoenix Park where, as His Majesty told a friend, it was intended that 'in view of the Queen's death the strictest privacy for a few days will be observed, as far as proper decency and decorum may require.' When he alighted in the Park his carriage was immediately surrounded by another crowd, and the King could not resist delivering himself of a pleasing impromptu speech.

'In addressing you, I conceive I am addressing the nobility, gentry, and yeomen of Ireland. This is one of the happiest moments of my life. I feel pleased, being the first of my family that set foot on Irish ground. Early in my life I loved Ireland,

my heart was always with them. I rejoice at being amongst my faithful Irish friends. I always considered them such, and this day proves to me I am beloved by them. Circumstances of a delicate nature, to which it is needless to advert, have precluded me from visiting you sooner. I have had a fatiguing voyage. If I do not express myself as warmly as I ought, I beg you will not attribute it to want of affection. I am obliged to you for the kindness you evinced towards me this day; rank, station and honour are nothing; to feel that I live in the hearts of my Irish subjects is to me the most exalted happiness. I assure you, my dear friends, I have an Irish heart, and will this night give a proof of my affection towards you, as I am sure you will towards me, by drinking your health in a bumper of whiskey punch.'

During the next few days the King remained quietly with Lord Talbot, the Lord-Lieutenant. On August 17 he made his State entry into Dublin, and it was perhaps the greatest personal triumph of his life. His Majesty was seated in an open barouche drawn by eight horses, while in his hat was displayed an enormous shamrock to which he repeatedly pointed. In the midst of the shouting he declared to his Private Secretary, Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, who was an Irishman, that 'he might be proud of his country: they are a noble people.' As he looked on the acclaiming multitudes from the windows of Dublin Castle he was observed to shed tears. Lord Sidmouth expressed wonder at the patent loyalty of a people who had recently been in rebellion; the King replied, 'No, not at all! Their former character must have been caused by misrule.' He discussed the Act of Union quite frankly with some of the Irish gentry, whom he met at the State Banquet which was given in the evening. 'You all committed a great mistake,' he said. 'You should have made terms as the Scotch did; and you could have got any terms!'

It was perhaps something of a coincidence that one of the King's ministers in attendance was Lord Londonderry, who as Lord Castlereagh and Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant twenty years before had been mainly responsible for the passing into law of the Act of Union. At that time the mob had burned him in effigy outside his house and then broken all his windows. He now came in for a truly astonishing share of the general acclamation. He was cheered tumultuously, and the people even attempted to chair him through the streets. 'I am grown as popular in 1821 as unpopular formerly, and with as little merit,' was his characteristic remark; 'and of the two unpopularity is the more convenient and gentlemanlike.'

After a round of entertainment which lasted for a week it was little wonder that Londonderry wrote enthusiastically to his wife :

' Dublin, 23rd. [August.]

My dearest Em,

. . . Never did Providence preside over any Barren transaction more auspiciously than over this visit to Ireland. It has been without alloy—everything perfect. I have not seen a drunken man in the streets, I have not heard an unkind word from a single individual, and yet I have mixed unsparingly with the people and the effect is not less strong in the remote parts of Ireland where every village has been illuminated for the King's arrival. A Gentleman met a poor Paddy from this part of Ireland in the streets of Dublin and asked him what had brought him to Town—"Sure your Honor I came to see the King." "But what made you come above 100 miles on such an errand?" "Why to be sure it was a good walk, but thought nothing of it, when I consider it, how much further His Majesty, Long life to Him, had come to see me!"

I shall set out to-morrow for the North after attending a Déjeuner given to the King on the lawn at Leinster House by the Dublin Society. I go to Slane en chemin with the Lord Lieut., Lord Sidmouth, and the Duke of Montrose, from whence I shall start early the next morning. The Esterhazys' and the Manners' replace us on Saturday, and the King returns to Dublin on Sunday to pursue his labors. He will embark on the 1st. I shall endeavour to reach Town as soon as the King, but you shall hear from me again upon my movements when I reach Mt. Stewart. . . .

*Yours ever, my Dearest Em,
Most affectionately,
L.'*

The hostess of Slane Castle, which is referred to in this letter, was, of course, the King's friend, Lady Conyngham. Her residence was in the neighbouring county of Meath. 'The King's passion for the place is equal to that for the proprietress,' wrote Londonderry afterwards; 'greater it cannot be.' Curiously enough the party included William Plunket, a relative of the Conynghams, whose virulent attacks on Castlereagh during the Union debates in the old Irish Parliament must rank as among the most severe in the history of rhetoric. But not even the presence of this erstwhile anti-Unionist leader disturbed the general harmony. 'The evening was most royally dull,' was Londonderry's laconic comment.

The King also visited Powerscourt, Lord Powerscourt's seat in County Wicklow, and even managed to put in a day's racing at the Curragh before he left Ireland.

September 3 was the date finally fixed for His Majesty's departure. The scene on the shore at Dunleary was extraordinary. Daniel O'Connell, the leading Nationalist and

champion of Repeal, appeared at the head of a deputation, and on his knees presented the King with a crown of laurel leaves. George shook him warmly by the hand, and accepted the tribute. 'My friends,' he said to those around him, 'when I arrived in this beautiful country, my heart overflowed with joy—it is now depressed with sincere sorrow. I never felt sensations of more delight than since I came to Ireland—I cannot expect to feel any superior nor many equal, till I have the happiness of seeing you again. Whenever an opportunity offers wherein I can serve Ireland, I shall seize on it with eagerness.' With these words His Majesty embarked, while several of the loyal gentry, who attempted to follow him on to the royal barge, fell into the water in an intoxication of loyalty and alcohol.

On the return journey the *Royal George* encountered a violent storm, with the result that the party had to land at Milford Haven after several unsuccessful attempts to stand out to sea and make Portsmouth. 'We lost the tiller,' wrote the King, 'and the vessel was for some minutes down on her beam ends . . . The oldest and most experienced of our sailors were petrified and paralysed . . . Everyone almost flew up in their shirts upon deck in terrors that are not to be described . . . Most even of our crew and company were deadly sick, but the very worst of all was my poor self; and I am now for the first time, since we are again at anchor in smooth water, risen from my bed, and not without considerable exertion and inconvenience to myself.'

George was eventually obliged to go ashore at Milford Haven on September 13. Two days later he was back in Carlton House.

It was altogether a memorable and no less remarkable visit. It might, under happier auspices, have presaged well

for the future happiness of Ireland. Unfortunately the 'spirit of loyal union' which King George IV was so gratified to notice did not, as he hoped, 'remain unabated and unimpaired' in the country. It was only in the nature of things, too, that the town where he landed should, after a century, revert to its old name. Still, there is some slight comfort in the reflection that to many this place is, and always will be, known as Kingstown.

A GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE.

*Here, like dead summer under winter skies,
Remote and still, bereft of song and bloom
The silent Garden of Remembrance lies,
Yet is not lonely, nor a place of gloom ;
For those who sleep herein await their spring
Or have already found it, far away ;
Like birds which leave sad shores to mount and sing .
Rapturous songs through endless summer day.*

*The hidden bulbs, the tight-closed buds await
The breath of spring to bid them wake and glow
And, One still standing at the garden gate
As in that Easter garden long ago
When His friends' faith, like the grey skies, was dim,
Shall wake to life all those who sleep in Him.*

C. M. MALLET.

MANNERS.

BY C. E. LAWRENCE.

ONCE on a late summertime a man was walking through a meadow and, as is customary with joyful hearts in the freedom and exhilarations of Nature, he slashed with his cane at the heads of the long seeding grasses and in doing so struck a bee ; whereupon instinctively he exclaimed, ' I beg your pardon ! ' That is the whole of the story, told because of the excellent manners of him who inadvertently had assaulted the most admirable of God's insects.

The apology can have brought no comfort to the bee, though it may have done so to the man ; yet the trait revealed by it was good. It marked a habit of consideration, a willingness, as might be, to mend what carelessness had done. It was a touch of the sympathy that makes the whole world more or less kin.

It also was good manners ; but—what are *they* ? A definition is called for, as manners, good manners, are our subject ; but definitions being, as a rule, only precise analyses of the meanings of particular words, they are seldom really illuminating. It is generally more helpful to describe. So Manners shall be described—as Courtesy in action. As Courtesy—yes, but also we must ask, what precisely is Courtesy ? Tut ! Are we never to be free of these insis-tencies towards verbal exactitude which, though well enough in a vocabularist's laboratory, are of small use anywhere else ? Again we prefer to describe, although thereby we may beg a question or two. Courtesy, then, shall be described as the quality of heart and mind that combines

forethought for and deference to others with grace of intention, sincerity, simplicity, gentleness, the patience to suffer bores without their knowing they are bores, and the will to be of service to—it matters not whom ! Doubtless, those are not all the constituents of that finest of social virtues, but they will serve ; especially as we know they were notably seen and proved in the ways and personalities of those universally-accepted supreme examples of Courtesy, Francis of Assisi and Don Quixote de la Mancha : saints, knights of service and gentlemen both, possessing the faults of true gentleness and saintship that are disclosed in angers and violence against the mean and cruel and both of them blessed with the supreme sanity which is the only saving madness in the world.

When Adam delved and Eve span . . . *he* was then the gentleman. Any other interpretation of that old rhyme, spouted by John Ball in feudal days when poverty had no rights, would be snobbery. Adam assuredly was a gentleman—‘ the first that ever bore arms,’ said the Gravedigger—and being newly-sprung from the soil and inspirations of Nature, the human firstling of Earth, a cousin to the stars and cradled among the winds, it was impossible for him to fall to any of those whims, shams and pretensions which, yielded to, must contaminate self-respect. Ordinary mankind being what it is, such sores and poor graces are bound at times to spoil so human a quality as Courtesy. As the brightest light casts the darkest shadows, so the quality of true manners has been the worse misused by the ungracious, and no insolence can be so hurtful as that which borrows the clothings of Courtesy for its ill-display.

‘ *Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.*’

Even what may be termed the cultivated manners of an

aristocracy are not enough, as was seen when the fourth Earl of Chesterfield laid down elaborate principles of social conduct for his son to follow. The counsel given, though rich and far-reaching in worldly wisdom, was not entirely uplifting—Dr. Johnson in his blunt fashion declared that it taught the morals of a courtesan and the manners of a dancing-master—mainly because every *grand seigneur* was a materialist and his ultimate purposes were practical, sometimes in not too pleasant a way.

John Ball's implication of the true status of Adam and Eve, in spite of its explosive intention, established a nobler principle than came from his lordship and belonged to the same period in the Middle Ages as brought William of Wykeham's saying, 'Manners Makyth Man.' The two declarations may be combined to show that with all the baseness, fever, colourful pageantry and squalor of medieval conditions, a spirit of self-respect and gentleness also was eagerly alive then and its necessity recognised. Such a truth as that proclaimed by William and used as its motto by his foundation, the College of St. Mary of Winchester, had already been tried and proved in battles and tournaments. Chivalry had lived for centuries and still was alive. The stoutest fighters in its bouts, who lived by its rules, were the first to put off angers and protect the fallen when the appeal for mercy was made to them; and it is curious to recall that the influence which made warfare less brutal—until the Machine, that monster, came to destroy pity—through establishing the spirit of courtesy and of fairness in fighting was brought by Crusaders from the pagan East and learnt from the Saracens whom they felt it was their duty to hate and spit upon—a compliment by those knights of Islam as generously returned. The romance of Chivalry was a long fantasy of many contradictions.

But its ideals, through overmuch or ill usage, tended to wear thin. While men with some care preserved its forms the spirit decayed, to become little more than a painted shadow. One sees how far the ideal was lost in its dying climax here, the Wars of the Roses, which to this country on its small scale were a counterpart to the long-suffered furies and treacheries of Guelphs and Ghibellines in the great arena of Europe. Brutes in armour, their shields painted with the symbols of old honours and estates, used grossly the opportunities given to them, and forgot the conventions in the heat of their blood-lust. Heroes and saints there were on both sides in all those conflicts ; but, of course, they were rare—heroes and saints are bound to be rare—while the hazards of battle made no distinctions between the virtuous and vicious. More ruthlessly than ever in those uncivil wars a brother destroyed his brother, a father his son. How could Courtesy survive among those shambles ?

The formalities that went to the practices of Chivalry must have been a chief cause of its decay. It is easy for ritual to lose meaning and become a mere setting for coloured poses ; and as the purity of the ideals that marked knighthood when in flower lapsed, so many warriors, trusting to the supposed professions of their victorious opponents, too often gave opportunities of which base use was made. They surrendered, expecting mercy, and were incontinently slain.

Soon thereafter, as weapons improved—if that is the right expression—in deadly efficiency, artillery and explosives especially being more destructively used, the old occasional courtesies in combat went. It was very well for the officers of the French and English Guards in the eighteenth century facing each other in battle-lines—somewhere in Flanders or thereabouts—to doff hats and invite their opponents to fire first, as that meant even less than the action of the dis-

solute Cavalier who boasted of having hopes of Heaven because he never had gone into a church without removing his headgear. The politeness of those embattled warriors was a gesture, less significant than the scrappiest handshake before the last round of a prize-fight, for both sides knew well that the other's artillery was ineffective and their marksmanship bad. Let them try such attitudes now !

Every courtly period had its faults, and always the worst was insincerity, as one sees most clearly, perhaps, in the Florence of Lorenzo dei Medici, when the fine arts and personal magnificence, luxury and its corruptions, cruelties, treacheries, murders were most extravagant, brilliant and evil. But it is necessary in estimating manners to have regard also to the peculiarities, the idiom, of an age ; for while the essentials may be much the same in all periods the outward expression is bound to be different. Like clothes, habits and manners alter with the years. This is seen instantly when one thinks of any period that was well marked in its ways—Elizabethan courtliness, graceful but guarded ; of the age of Anne, heavier, more formal, less sincere ; of the four Georges, coarse, careless, hearty, blunt ; of Victoria, early or late, at one time smug but renewing its forms with ' princes of commerce ' intruding to alter standards through making the possession of wealth of significant social importance ; and now.

With all the haste of our own times, so noisy, stressed and often inconsiderate—with the deliberate poking into privacies by an intrusive cheap Press eager to exploit some passing sensation, the ' crashing ' into parties of uninvited guests (how appalled the Victorians would have been by that vulgarity !), the dancing that is a laboured prose far distant from the grace of the minuet and the social cheeriness of the lancers and quadrilles, an inconsiderate selfishness for securing

inexpensively and without consideration to others the best places anywhere, with the many things else that blot or impoverish the manners of the present—they, at least, have not the callousness or baseness of many of the old discourtesies.

Before coming to that, however, let us leave the abstractions to contemplate the Beaux, those spoilt beings—in their natural moments often quite human—to whom dress was a ritual and manners were a lay religion; such as Richard Nash; George Brummel, that poor, swollen, decorated creature of commonplace, and Goldsmith's fictitious little man, Tibbs. 'Goldy' adored a Beau; his own bloom-coloured coat, of which the envious Boswell made heavy fun, showed his urgent inward desire himself to be one. He detailed the principles of eighteenth-century dandyship both in his admiring biography of Nash and in the portrait of Beau Tibbs, as glimpsed occasionally in *The Citizen of the World*.

Nash in his self-elected authority as the King of Bath was powerful enough to teach more than the husk of manners to the fashionable world in its most elaborate period, and on one occasion had the courage to tear from the person of a duchess the white apron that she wore in defiance of his published regulations; while Goldsmith's little Tibbs, at the other extreme of social authority, with only the smallest provision of wit and a poverty not too proud, haunted the walks of worldly greatness and prated of friendships that only himself was aware of. Between those extremes of foppery came 'Goldy' himself, whose foibles and vanities, however carelessly or carefully displayed, did not prevent his being also a very true gentleman. In his sweetness of heart he could not be harsh and if he thought an unkindness at once was ashamed of it.

Mr. Turveydrop Senior, who makes his appearance in *Bleak House*, introduces us to another aspect—no less actual although with him fictitious—of social manners and parasitism. A would-be Beau of sorts, with only an effort of deportment to justify his poses, he was indeed a nonentity, and lacked even the personal dignity that marked the ‘man made after supper of a cheese-paring’ of Falstaff’s disdain. Tibbs, in his paltry way, was something of an artist; but Turveydrop was only a cheap and showy suit of clothes. But Dickens—be it said with the reverence due to his genius—was not exactly a safe guide in manners. Ruthless himself, through his lusty, bounding confidence in life, his manly characters were apt to be ruthless too, loud-voiced and assertive; and when he meant them to be gentle they were lifeless, affected, dull. It has been asserted that in the multitude of persons created by his genius, there wasn’t a gentleman. It is a statement difficult to deny; although the Elect must do so. Sir Leicester Dedlock, says one; the Cheerybles, cry others; Mr. Pickwick, Eugene Wrayburn! But were any of them really so? Having watered that seed of discord we leave it and proceed to safer realms, being comforted with the knowledge that in Dickensian controversy rabbits can bite like tigers.

While we are recalling the Beaux, Dudes, Bloods and Dandies in their various chapters of behaviour and fashion, we might as well go to that other Victorian master-novelist, Mr. Thackeray, who knew from A to Z what manners and mis-manners meant. ‘What is it to be a gentleman?’ he asks in *The Book of Snobs*.

‘Is it to be honest, to be gentle, to be generous, to be brave, to be wise, and, possessing all these qualities, to exercise them in the most graceful outward manner? Ought a gentleman to be a loyal son, a true husband and honest

father : Ought his life to be decent—his bills to be paid—his tastes to be high and excellent—his aims in life lofty and noble ? In a word, ought not the Biography of a First Gentleman in Europe to be of such a nature that it might be read in Young Ladies' Schools with advantage, and studied with profit in the Seminaries of Young Gentlemen ?'

Remembering 'Prinny,' the Prince Regent, His Majesty King George the Fourth, amid the sordid realities of his ill-managed life, that is a question set in a pretty vein of irony.

Sham manners at best are a foolishness and can be nasty. Like the high-flown phrases that have been put for comedy into Chinese mouths in English melodramatic plays, their politeness is not really polite. The calculated form or pretence of courtesy, that barely hides a smirk or a jab or is the oil of inefficient tradesmanship, belongs to an odiousness that should be kicked with iron-shod boots. Blunt rudeness has often at least the merit of being sincere ; though it is bound in almost any circumstances also to be deplorable, inexcusable. The most discerning remark made by Arthur Christopher Benson in his multitudinous pages of kindly prose was that of rudeness being the only sin. Be that so or not, certainly it is the worst of sins, as often it leaves wounds that do not heal and are capable of poisoning the hopes and self-reliance of a lifetime. The only excuse for rudeness is no excuse. It is that it comes from mere stupidity ; as one can well believe after recalling or reading in Victorian biographies and fiction examples of the insolences of that time and especially of the ill-doing of 'cutting-dead'—deliberately to pass an acquaintance or former friend, not as if he were unseen, but with a prod and rejection of eyes, purposely insulting. It was not uncommon also in that limited great age for the smallest imperfections in mien or

novelty of dress to be made the subjects of open ridicule in the vulgar streets ; even a timid poverty of appearance, a waddling walk, a physical blemish, a deformed limb, the imagined misfortune of an ill-furnished face—all, anything, was an opportunity for the guffaw that marked an empty, clumsy, cruel mind. The character of laughter, that may be a caress or a bludgeon, is important in the aspect of a personality as well as a sign and measure of manners. Like tones of voice, the movements of hands and feet, shades of countenance, of lips and eyes, so is the quality of a personality through the ways of its mirth revealed. It is significant ; such glints or shadows denoting characteristics, from out of which through the habit of manners, of good manners, that indefinable quality, Charm, may come.

As regards the opportunities of courtesy the present age has one great disadvantage, which comes from the over-indulgence and popularity (or usefulness) of the Machine—and especially of the motor-car—which has put power into the hands of the weakest. For a time the ways of the motorist were as bad as could be. Road-hogs with their hootings and rushings, their recklessness and urge to the risks of danger, and their worse than selfish encroachments on the privileges of the roads, lowered the values of manners badly. Such things are better now. Although accidents through undue speed on the highways are increasing in number, they come rather from the very large growth in the number of vehicles used than (as a daily pedal-cyclist may testify) to thoughtless driving. The courtesy of the road has become a reality. The manners of the best are improving those of all.

Much of this improvement can be ascribed to the widespread interest in sports and pastimes and the rules, legislating for fair-play, that govern them. Simple selfishness in any

game is now not cricket. The team-spirit is strengthening and, however eager sides may be to win a match, there is still such goodwill between the opponents that the losers can almost share the gladness of the result. Manners Makyth—among other persons the true sportsman ! The School tie, the Club tie, the badge of the regiment, of the ship, of the boys' brigade, cannot now be worn in meanness of spirit, though its fetish need not be so compelling as was shown by the hunter who, on hearing that a tiger was chasing an Indian woman, seized his rifle—to find himself unable to fire on the Old School colours.

The improvement of manners in sport is most evident in a prize-fight. Once that was a loathly affair, with no measured times for rounds or for pauses between ; and no regulations as to where or how and where not to punch. As might be said, there was no belt, while a hundred years ago pugilists shaved their heads to avoid giving hand-holds of hair to the adversary. Honour, then, to the eighth Marquess of Queensberry, who, by the testimony of his candid friends, had his full share of human faults, for bringing into recognised all-round practice regulations which made professional fisticuffs honourable and worthy to be popular. The Queensberry rules not only taught the coarsest of men the principles of fair-play, but they led to improvements of manners in all the pastimes.

As in large things so in the supposedly small things of everyday life, good manners give smoothness to the common round. There is magic as well as virtue in the words ' Thank you ' and ' Please,' they have opened difficult doors ; while in contradistinction to those whose manners are only a part of their clothing, the general courtesy of policemen, railway-men, omnibus-conductors and others, to whom many people often must be very tiresome, deserves to be proverbial,

though strangely one still at times encounters a shortness of ways very like discourtesy from women postal assistants, though not from the men. That exception to a general experience must be due to outworn nerves ; the strain of hours given to infinite small acts of service and of no imaginative importance being too much for the more delicate sensibilities. So that even they may have their excuses.

But there still are many people cursed with a rudeness not excusable, as the eternal vulgarian, newly-wealthy and puffed-up, loud-voiced, super-assertive, like Mr. Hoggesheimer in *The Girl from Jay's*, who said, ' I'm not rude. I'm rich ! '—as revealing a line as any in musical comedy ; or the effete descendant of an old, old family, the morally poor relation, who has inherited from his or her outworn descent only a bloodless heart and a bankrupt vanity. To such as this and that a servant or shop-assistant is still only a chattel and the note of address used, though rarely of intention offensive, often spoken in tones so harsh as to seem insulting and to wound. Excellently has John Ruskin described such callousness in his *Sesame and Lilies* as ' a simple and innocent vulgarity,' but every vulgarity, however innocent, simple or crude, can hurt. ' You are requested not to—' is better than ' It is forbidden ' ; and ' No admittance except on business,' than the blunt American business-man's prominently posted, ' Get Out ! This means You ! '

We come to the forms of courtesy due to women, which the equality rightly given to the sexes has a little disarranged. Chivalry paid its homage to Beauty—full, devout, fulsome. Every Andromeda had her Perseus, every Una her Red-Cross Knight ; and if sometimes a Guinevere was unworthy of her Arthur, and a Cressida of her Troilus, they, and others faulty in the observance of the rights of love and the ideals of purity, were brought by poetic licence and the justice of

the old-fashioned sentimental gods to disastrous ends. But even in the disastrous ends their sense of right-doing, the fruits of their natural and disciplined knightliness generally so preserved the culprits that they showed no meanness. The manners of Chivalry on the whole endured the supreme tests.

Modern tendencies, including the increasing dominance of the Machine which hurtles noisily on and on, have somewhat endangered many of the old ideals. The spirit of equality between the sexes has come to stay and, of course, is right to both women and men ; but its advantages need not be stringently exacted—by men. Should one give up his seat in a crowded railway-carriage to a woman who otherwise must stand ? A trifling question, yet called for. Certainly he should, in spite of the occasional neglect by many healthy and evidently unwearied young women to make an acknowledgment of the courtesy offered often by a wearied man, a fault that must come rather from shyness than want of thought. It is about the only opportunity left to men for practising chivalry in the modern age.

Courtesy must be real if it is to mean anything, and not be a mere form as was the act of Spanish politeness described to me by the late William Archer. He was travelling on a railway in Spain, when a boy entered the carriage. As soon as the lad was settled in his place he took from his pocket a hunk of meat-pie and with a hurried circling movement formally offered it to his companions in the compartment. At once then, for it happened all in the flash of an instant, he proceeded to eat. The action was the merest concession to habit—yet better so than no such gesture at all ; for implicitly it asked the permission to eat—or we hope so.

Which brings us again to the truth that in the province

of courtesy it is sincerity that chiefly counts. The little tricks do not matter. They can be tolerated, even enjoyed, as they are trifles. In late-Victorian days it was the fad for a brief time to shake hands at or above the level of the shoulder, as earlier it had been a popular affectation—and long after the days of Lord Dundreary, with whom, indeed, it may have begun—to pronounce *r*'s like *w*'s, to dwibble and dwape, to be dwearwy, to suffer the dwopsy. Such twifles—I mean trifles—in manners of speech or otherwise are like bubbles, rapid brevities, glittering next-to-nothings. But the qualities of gentleness, and not the mere tricks of deportment and speech, go deeper, having a living, basic reality, as was implied by Shakespeare's shepherd of the 'Winter's Tale' in a remark made to his clownish son, 'For we must be gentle, now we are gentle men.' In that revealing phrase, put into the mouth of a peasant come suddenly to wealth and courtly circumstance, Shakespeare revealed his own natural gentleness of spirit, and rebuked the rudely-rich who must leave it to later generations to grow to the manners that should garment their fortune.

Chivalry still was alive in the age of Elizabeth ; at least among the poets and the sailors who went out to the rough seas following their stars to—they cared not where or what, though if a gold-mine or a treasure-ship happened to come in their way . . . The statesmen and politicians were not so exalted in their aims ; while the Queen who yet was the Ideal Lady, the particular Guiding Star, to her adventurers, herself wandered doubtfully between the extremes of national idealism and practical reality. Rarely at any time have treacheries, trials, quarrels and murders, legal or personal, been worse than those which blackened not her but her later years, and were still more evil, as the ghost of Raleigh, if it would, might bear witness, during the reign of her successor,

the unspeakable James. Yet the graces of Chivalry, of Courtesy, were in the hearts of her poets, as repeatedly we discover from the music of their inspiration. Shakespeare, Spenser, Sidney—their names are legion. In the long story of the *Faerie Queene*, the sixth Book, which details the Legend of Sir Calidore or Courtesye, is second to no other of its parts in grace, loveliness and truth.

*‘ That vertue should be plentifully found,
Which of all goodly manners is the ground,
And roote of civill conversation.’*

It was Sir Calidore who chased and battled with the Blatant Beast ; which, however, was not destroyed, as Macaulay declared in his brilliant, hasty essay, but was able to escape before Spenser, through his own premature death, had duly dealt with it, to flourish still and for ever where vulgarity, discourtesies and the baser crudities of thought, heart and manners persist.

And while such evils continue the virtues opposed to them also must persist, and let us hope with far greater strength. St. Paul tells us why. ‘ Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners.’ The truth is there put with a helpfulness frank. It depends on the company kept and the value of the ideals maintained.

The influence of Religion, especially through its universal examples of gentleness, sweetness of heart and self-sacrifice, of course has been immeasurable. It is, or it should be, of the most sacred chivalry and used to soften and strengthen knighthood ; and so long as it lasted the ritual, rules, sympathies and sanctuaries of Chivalry were effectual, and left a golden influence behind, with the assurance that in spite of the carelessness of increasingly hasty times it cannot entirely vanish from the Earth.

In the quality of Courtesy there must be imagination of heart and there can be no compromise. Sincerity is its soul, and there are no half-measures with that. It is shown in infinite ways—in St. Francis's patient request to the chattering birds that were interrupting his sermon ; in Don Quixote's acceptance of inn-maids and ostlers and of his own blowzed Dulcinea as belonging to the azure-blooded aristocracy of Spain ; in Sir Philip Sidney's refusal of the cup of water that was another's greater necessity ; in the roadside succour given by the Samaritan whose name although not known is immortal.

Courtesy accepts all of decent heart into a natural equality. Patronage and condescension, those weaknesses of fools, have no part in it. It is of the knighthood that flowers without fading, and its power comes from simplicity, truthfulness and human love. It has an equal kindness for the simplest and the lowliest. So that if upon a late summertime, in walking abroad in the freedom and exhilarations of Nature and slashing with a cane among the long seeding grasses, one happens to strike a bee—well, why not apologise instantly to that most admirable of God's insects ?

REQUIEM.

(FOR DON ALVARO ALCALA GALIANO Y OSMÁ.)

*The 'Reds' call 'Rebel' whom the soul of Spain
Knows for her own and takes to her again ;
And whom his ancient, honoured line will greet,
Nobler by death, and prouder by defeat.*

GRIFFYTH FAIRFAX.

HALLUCINATION.

BY ANTHONY FETTYPLACE.

My host, John Shiplake, was mending a line in the sitting-room of his small fishing lodge at Lye-on-Lugg. Several of my fellow-guests were sitting about, waiting for the sun to go off the water, and exchanging anecdotes. Presently, in a long pause of the talk, Shiplake laid down his line.

‘The strangest fishing story I ever heard,’ he said slowly, ‘was *not* a fishing story; for a man set out to fish, and never fished, while five broken ribs and a hallucination were all he caught. It happened to a man I knew of the name of Marcle, Lawrence Marcle—a dark fellow with a faintly foreign air about him. I think his family came from Italy generations ago, though it had been English enough time out of mind. He’d just got married (in twenty-four it was) to a pretty girl with a milkmaid complexion and hair the colour of a carrot, plenty of spirit, and the nerve of a V.C. I think she was only afraid of one thing *out* of the world, and that was the supernatural.

‘The morning of their marriage, then, a September day in twenty-four, as I’ve said, he and his Geraldine packed themselves into their two-seater car, stowed lots of luggage behind, and a couple of rods, and set out from Haughmondshire for the Hodder Valley, on a weepish-looking day, meaning to spend their honeymoon fishing.

‘They went on under that dolorous sky that refused to rain, and showed odd ghosts of sunshine at intervals—driving slowly, and as they liked to drive—stopping at every ruin, every fine church, every vantage-point, that

promised a view. And their route, to my mind, is rather important to the story. You see, it was a slow declension—which is one of the disadvantages of going north—you've Peovor and South Prestonshire to get through. And to imaginative people there's a vague depression, that slowly settles down on one, in leaving that glorious Haughmondshire border, and gradually working one's way into those implacable grey flats.

'They felt so, at all events, as they left the last outpost of the hill country at Tarporley, and dropped down into the flats after a late tea at the "Hop Pole."

'They had felt very jolly over that tea in that most exquisite of all exquisite Peovor inns. There had been quite a cheerful fire burning in the grate, too, which lit up the comfortable North Country furniture and the ranks of Liverpool Delft on tryddarn and dresser, and those oil paintings, that only the North-West seems to know, strange landscapes in umbers and dark greens lying perpetually under masses of stormy cumulus.

'As they left Tarporley, therefore, under that lowering sky, and found themselves on the long, straight stretches of the Watling Street, their talk turned on the future—on the fishing they would have, on the improvements they would make in their small estate—their properties (nice little places in the tumbled lands immediately to the west of Haughmond) marched, and were now, of course, united.

'Then, as they passed through Stretton, the peculiarity of the name turned their thoughts and conversation, as it has turned that of many travellers on this northward-trending road, to the mystery of the Watling Street.

"It's a strange thing," Marcle said, "how this old road, so to speak, keeps on all the way from Dover to Wroxeter, two hundred miles odd—never a falter, as straight and

clear as on the day the Romans finished it. And then one loses it; the centuries have choked it; it comes and goes like a ghost."

His wife looked for a moment at the strange country, which lay flat and salt under that desolate sky, and then answered.

"I wonder," she said, "what's become of the Watling Street. I suppose it's somewhere buried under all those sodden-looking fields and acres of salt lagoons. *And then it comes back.* There's something uncanny about it. I've always been a little frightened of the Watling Street, like the old Saxons, I suppose, who thought it spelt witchcraft, and wouldn't build a village anywhere on it. I don't like it; it goes, *and then it comes back*; and even between times you've always a feeling that it's somewhere close at hand, waiting for you."

"I've never felt exactly that," he answered. "I've always been fascinated by Roman roads—I could pore over a map of them for hours."

"Perhaps that's your Roman blood," Geraldine answered fancifully. "No doubt some of your ancestors in magnificent moulded brass cuirasses helped to make it—or stood about monumentally, and told others to do so."

He laughed. "More likely my Antiquarian blood. You know how my father *would* potter about, and dig, wherever he saw a likely looking hummock."

They gradually fell into silence. There was something in the day that appeared to discourage conversation. The Watling Street, with the inconsequence of Roman roads in northern England, had again disappeared, and their way proceeded in great loops and unnecessary curvetings through the absolutely flat and greyish country. Somewhere under those water-logged fields, which stretched away on their

right to the salt-ridden lands of Eastern Peovor, it lay hiding, waiting to spring on them again.

‘ So leisurely had been their progress, and so many stops had they made to visit a lost village church, a lost manor house now fallen from its estate, or to stop for no reason whatever save that of smoking a cigarette and talking together in the absence of their engine’s noise and in the deepening hush of this autumn country—that before they were quite clear of Wanborough, dusk had fallen. Away to the east, as they left the town, the lights of far-off pit heaps glimmered on a horizon that was lit by the dubious glare of blast furnaces. The very atmosphere began to have a sulphurous and metallic tang.

‘ They stopped at a roadside inn for dinner, which, like the whole of their journey of that day, was a matter of great leisureliness. They took their coffee out on to a kind of verandah, which, looking westwards, carried the eye over a stretch of wooded country, now of a varied but formless darkness under the September night. Vague sounds came out of it, and once, the long, trailing, serpentine light of a train.

‘ Suddenly Geraldine seized her husband’s arm.

‘ “Lawrence,” she said, “I know you’re a careful driver, no one could be more so, but will you, please, please, drive more carefully to-night than you’ve ever driven before?”

‘ There was an intonation of anxiety, almost, it seemed, of something more, in her voice. Her strong fingers tightened on his arm.

‘ “What is it?” he said. “Another of your intuitions, darling? Don’t worry. I’ll be careful.”

‘ “I wish we had stayed at Tarporley,” she continued, “safe for the night, and driven through this country by daylight. There are so many *things* here. I never feel safe

in flat country, and this country's uncanny. There are so many *things*—layers and layers of *things* on it, *deep* on it—from that road, that plays at hide-and-seek, to the ghastly mess of blast furnaces and pit heaps, that people have left lying about in the last hundred years. How can anyone live in a manufacturing country, and be happy ? ”

“ I suppose they get used to it.—But would you like to stay the night, Geraldine ? I'll ask if they can find us a bed, and we can go on to the Hodder to-morrow.”

“ Will you ? Oh, do. But I'm a fool. Do you hate me for being such a fool ? ”

‘ He no doubt answered her question in appropriate ways, and, going into the hotel, sought the landlord.

“ ‘ I'm most dreadfully sorry, sir,’ the man answered. ‘ But I haven't a room vacant. It's so unusual for me. There's a manufacturers' conference on to-morrow at Wanborough. Every inn's full. I doubt if you'll get a bed this side Windwick.’ ”

‘ Marcle lit a cigar, and walked out again into the warm darkness. Geraldine came to meet him.

“ ‘ Don't tell me they haven't a bed, because I know. I felt in my bones all the time that we should have to go on and on into the night. And it's such a soft insidious sort of night, like an insincere person. But never mind. We'll be all right. Just finish your cigar, and give me a cigarette, and then we'll go on again.’ ”

‘ She paused, and stood suddenly still, with a hand on her husband's arm—a habitual and quite unconscious gesture with her.

“ ‘ It's rather a strange thing,’ she said in the low voice of someone listening. ‘ Did you hear anything then ? I've heard it three times.’ ”

“ ‘ Nothing except that faint noise the blast furnaces make

far to the east," he answered, "and a car somewhere away in the night. Why?"

'She seemed almost unwilling to answer.

' "No, it wasn't that kind of noise I meant," she answered at last, and almost, it seemed, reluctantly. "Do you remember the strange tunes the Euripidean choruses are set to in the productions of Monroe's translations? I saw one at Oxford two years ago."

' "Yes. I know. A sort of plain-song chant."

' "It was like that. Singing, very faint; but the curious thing was, it didn't seem far away. It was just over those woods there, about three fields away, but—but—" her voice suddenly took on a note of hysteria—"it hadn't any right to be so faint, when it was so close. And there were a lot of people singing. Oh, I know it's my imagination, and I probably didn't really hear it; but that doesn't make it any the less unpleasant."

' "My dear," he said, "you shouldn't have gone to those wretched séances three months ago. Confounded things. I always said they'd upset your nerves."

' "Listen," she answered. "This time. Do you hear?"

' Marcle turned his face towards the now invisible woods, and attempted to hold his senses open to whatever sounds might be coming from their direction.

' Far away, and intermittently, came the whisper and ghostly muttering of the blast furnaces. Also there was a throbbing on the night, a continuous rhythmic sound—thud—thud—thud; *that* would be the gigantic new pumping station five miles away at Penwortham-le-woods. No—nothing else, except a distant car somewhere to the south. Then, it seemed almost as though he did hear, but whether an actual sound from the lonely and wood-involved country to the west, or an imagined sound in his own brain, he

could not tell. There it was again—a long eerie chant, monotonously repeated on about three tones and their accompanying semitones—very faint, as Geraldine had said—too faint for rational explanation, seeing that it appeared to come from no farther away than the long line of woods to the west, which now lay under the moonless night, unstirred and unrustling in the complete absence of any wind.

“You heard it then,” Geraldine said. “I know you heard it. Your face, as you turned to the window, told me. Darling, I don’t believe in omens. I know it’s imagination, but *do* drive carefully. Shall we go now?”

‘They paid their bill, and went, driving their car steadily northward under that moonless and unbreathing night, through Windwick, through Penwortham-le-woods—passing, as they did so, the gaunt, tower-like chimney of the pumping station, whose ghostly thud-thud and lapsing sound of water followed them for miles after they had left it far to the south. To the people of that village, Marcle reflected, it must be a sound beaten and thudded into their very blood—a continual memento of the passage of time, like the thudding of a gigantic grandfather clock. They probably heard it by a kind of persistence of mental impression, even when they were absent from their village.

‘There had been no repetition in either of their brains of those sounds which had so disturbed Geraldine at the inn near Wanborough; but Marcle noticed that his wife sat as close as possible to him; her eyes, too, under the roof-light of their coupé, showed strained and unhappy. She started at the distant noises, from which night in that part of the north country is never wholly free—he could sense, though it never touched his, her foot leap forward to an imaginary brake every time a pair of headlights

approached them. She was thoroughly "rattled," he told himself.

'Now the road, forgetting its straightness, twisted with the persistence of a serpent—the headlights of an approaching car would appear to be moving at right angles to them; then the beams would slowly shift through a great arc of sky, before the car itself appeared on the bare hundred yards of straight, which was all the road allowed.

'Then, quite suddenly, as they rounded a particularly bad hairpin, they saw under the penetrating beam of their six lamps the road once more running straight ahead, farther than they could see, and diminishing between the twin lines of its encroaching woods. The Watling Street, that hoary player at hide-and-seek, had leapt out of its lurking-place among the damp and fungus-smelling woodlands, and had found them.

'At the same moment the beams from their lamps flared to a blinding intensity; the road for hundreds of yards was like day; then, with as little warning, they were in darkness. The filaments had blown.

'Marcle carefully drove the car on to the flat grass margin, and stopped.

"You were quite right," he said cheerfully, "there *was* need for special caution to-night. Thank heaven I was driving so carefully." He took an electric torch from the locker behind the seat, and began to look for the damage. It was, so far as he was concerned, irreparable. Only a garage could right the matter, and with three or four mechanics working in a good light it would probably be a question of some hours. But with the general perverseness of all electrical arrangements, the lamps had chosen to blow their filaments at the one point on the great north-west road where there was probably not a garage for miles.

There was nothing to be done but to go on with the feeble aid of the electric torches till they reached some house. Marcle stood on the running-board, and directed the beams of their two torches on to the road in front of the car ; Geraldine, straining her sight into the dimness of their inadequate rays, slowly drove on for the best part of two miles. During that time they met no traffic ; the straight road lay empty between its parallel lines of coppice, which smelt of damp and toadstools and the decaying wood of fallen trees. Overhead the sky was of a blackness which seemed to have in it some actually stifling quality, a kind of breathlessness.

“The old road’s found us again,” Marcle said, “and, ’pon my honour, it’s going to do another vanishing trick.”

‘He was right. A red triangle showed in the light of the torches, under which gleamed the horizontal letter U put up by the county authorities to indicate the approach to a hairpin bend. At the same moment they saw the inn. Tall and narrow, built of large blocks of gritstone, and with minute windows under a ponderous roof of stone slabs, it had plainly been there for centuries. It had probably dispensed strong ale to the remote ancestors of the very men who were now, sober as councillors, issuing at a punctual ten o’clock from its high doorway. They bade each other contented good nights.

“Any garage about the neighbourhood ?” Marcle asked one of them.

‘No, he learned, there was no garage nearer than six miles, and no other inn. But George Euxton, the landlord, would willingly put them up, though he did not make a practice of it.

‘Ten minutes afterwards the men had dispersed to their cottages, going off quietly in twos and threes, and the inn

was left alone in the starless and windless night, to look, as it had looked for five centuries and more, down that undeviating Roman road.

“Ah’m very sorry,” said the landlord. He did not say “sir,” no South Prestonian does. “Ah conna gie yo much. There’s nobbut two beds aired. But Ah can gie yo a roof, an’ some of the bacon Ah’m going to have for my own supper, an’ that’s about all. Cum yer ways in.”

‘He was inaccurate. The house offered them less than he said. As he showed them into a bedroom, which smelt as damp as the oak coppices outside, and much colder, a dreary depression settled upon both his guests. This was to be their lodging upon the first night of their life together—this charnel house of a bedroom. The landlord went lumbering off downstairs, the rays from his lamp sending odd lights crawling and wavering over walls and ceiling, as he turned at the corners of the various flights.

‘As soon as he had gone, Geraldine turned the bed down, and put her hand in.

“‘It’s as damp as a used bath towel,” she said. “We can’t sleep in it, Lawrence. We’ll have to camp on the counterpane, and in mackintoshes at that. Never mind, darling, I’m so happy that we’ve got to the end of this day without an accident. I’ve been so ridiculously frightened. All day I’ve seen us overturned, or dead in a ditch, or something else equally unpleasant. And now I’m so happy I don’t care if we have to sleep *on*, but not *in* all the damp beds in Prestonshire in succession.”

‘But in spite of her deliberately cheerful remarks, Marcle noticed that she looked round the room, at the grey ceiling, unwhitened for many years; at the walls, bulging, and covered with a paper once brown, now grey, mildewed and

peeling, with a glance in which aversion blended with a look not unlike fear.

‘He went to the window, and flung it open. In contrast with the temperature of this room, the night struck hot. Absolute silence, not even the mutter of leaves; only that ceaseless though intermittent sound, which is never absent from South Prestonshire, the mutter and whistle of machinery, seemed to lie everywhere behind that silence, and to suggest itself rather than actually to be heard. His wife’s voice came from the bed.

“What are you listening for, Lawrence?” she asked.

“Only that strange mutter of machinery,” he answered, “like a sound buried under silence.”

‘He looked at her. Huddled in mackintosh and overcoat from the damp cold of the room, she half-sat up on the reddish patchwork quilt of the bed. Her candid eyes looked at him with an affection so utter, that it was a thing poignant, a thing to catch a man by the throat. The candle flame on the round table by the bed burned up straight and yellow in the unmoving air, and threw the fringed shadow of the tester sharp on the dirty ceiling. A spectre-candle appeared to burn behind the mahogany surface of a vast double-towered wardrobe. So still was the night, that the soiled ribbons, which hung from the mirror on the chest of drawers, drooped motionless as the motionless leaves out in the woods.

‘He turned back to the window, and continued to look out into the darkness for a long time. To the north of the inn he could see that the woods thinned out, and gradually gave way to more open country—and then experienced a shock of surprise that on such a night he could distinguish anything. But there was no doubt of it. Behind this thick pall of clouds a moon must be rising,

whose muted light, unable to reach the earth, was yet sufficient faintly to mitigate its darkness.

‘Presently he left the window, and wrapping himself in his mackintosh, also lay down on the reddish coverlet of the bed.

‘An hour passed, and, in spite of their discomfort, Geraldine and Marcle slept. One or two cars passed in the road, but they did not hear. Once the inn dog, lonely, as dogs sometimes are at night for who knows what reason, came up, and howled outside their door, but their sleep remained undisturbed. They lay unconscious in their mackintoshes on that damp and unclean bed and in that damp and unclean room, holding hands, as children might, for that reassurance of companionship which goes beneath consciousness, and may be present to the mind even in sleep.

‘As they slept, the night gradually grew less obscured. A faint and ghostly mitigation of the darkness, which was yet not light, spread under the clouds, and made visible the road, the grass margins, the parallel and encroaching woods. It was as though this faintly and dubiously illuminated world were a scene set for a play, and on which some titanic stage-manager was very slowly turning up the lights.

‘Geraldine was the first to wake. Drowsy and half-conscious, on the very borderland of sleep, she slowly realised that she was listening to a sound. She wondered vaguely whether it was that which had waked her. She did not know. It was one which she had heard before, a rhythmic vibration, slow and regular, but considerably quicker than when she had heard it in the late afternoon. *Thud-thud*, like a gigantic pendulum—like the thudding of the pumping station at Penwortham-le-woods. But surely

they were miles away from it now. Could she hear it so far? Or was this damp and sodden country full of pumping stations? Then the tempo changed. *Thud-thud; thud-thud*. With a stir of the pulses entirely unpleasant, she realised what it was. It was not the vibration of the pump at Penwortham-le-woods, it was the tramping of feet, of a great number of feet, striking the earth in complete unison. It was a body of men marching. Then, with a pang, which was entirely of terror, she heard something else. Faintly on the air of that overcast night came the sound which had alarmed her in the hotel garden outside Wanborough—like the singing of a monotonous chanty, a sort of plain-song on three tones and their semitones—this theme of a few notes repeated again and again; endlessly and, to her ears, menacingly recurring.

‘Suddenly it grew louder, as though a volume of sound hitherto muted by the woods had emerged suddenly on to that straight stretch of Roman road, which began where their lamps had gone out, and which actually passed the window, now showing as a lighter blur on the darkness of the walls. She could see the looking-glass against it with its trailing ribbons. The sound was coming nearer, fast growing in volume, as it swung down the road—and yet she felt *the sound was in her own brain*, echoing in her tired head. In an access of terror she turned to her husband, and shook him repeatedly.

“Lawrence, Lawrence,” she called to him, shouting in her terror. “Can you hear it? can you hear it, too?”

‘Then she was silent, for Marcle’s action on rising was, if possible, more terrifying than what was outside, or in her own brain—she did not know which.

‘He rose without a word, and with the action of a somnambulist. In the rays of the candle, which she had just

fumbled for, and lighted, his eyes showed blank and glazed, like those of a man walking in his sleep. She did not dare to speak to him again.

‘Now she could distinguish the words of that interminable song which came from outside—a song which must have been old when Hadrian’s Wall was built, and when the first cobble was laid on the foundations of the Watling Street. But soldiers’ songs die hard ; the same ditties may be sung for two hundred years after the circumstances, which suggested them, have been utterly forgotten. Probably this one had echoed many a time along the desolate straight Roman roads of this and other countries, even as it was echoing now—or was it merely in the brain of the terrified listener ?

“ *Quirites, look to your wives,
Quirites, look to your wives,
The bald-headed philanderer’s coming.*”

‘Many times that song must have been heard to the accompaniment of laughter ; now, perhaps for the first time, it was heard in terror, bewilderment and dismay. It burst out again under the window. The noise was deafening. A thousand throats bellowed it. Two thousand feet struck in their practised unison the surface of the road.

‘Agonised, following an impulsion she would have been entirely powerless to combat, Geraldine moved to the window, at which Marcle was already standing, still with the appearance and blank gaze of a sleep-walker. Dreading what she might see, she forced herself to look out.

‘Under that strange crepuscular half-light, under that bellowing cataract of sound, the road, between its autumn-smelling woodlands, stretched utterly lonely and deserted. The contrast between the emptiness of the road and the waves of clamour which assailed her ears was entirely

obnoxious and dismaying to her. And the man at her side was behaving as though he saw what she could not. He was leaning out of the window, and waving. Then, at the top of his lungs, he began to yell the same song.

“*Quirites, look to your wives,
Quirites, look to your wives.*”

He turned abruptly, opened the bedroom door, and walked downstairs. The woman, left at the window, could hear him moving about, fumbling with the latch of the front door, opening it. She stood there, waiting, fearfully conscious that presently she would see as well as hear. She was unable to move.

‘Was there not (her terrified brain asked her) a faint and nebulous appearance, an actual thin cloud of dust, rising, moving along the road under the window—just such a cloud of dust as would be raised by the tramping feet of an army? Still physically unable to move, she presently saw Marcle emerge from the door of the inn, suddenly draw himself erect, raise his right hand in the salute of the legions, even saw him make that odd little skipping movement by which the feet bring themselves into step with a marching body of men; then watched him stride off, moving in perfect unison with that deafening noise of tramping, which beat somewhere inside her brain. He was marching along the road—*grotesquely in company with nothing whatever*—striding along due north between the motionless woods, his arms swinging to the rhythm of the song.

‘Now she understood—his Italian, his probably Roman ancestry. She remembered her words of the previous evening—“Perhaps some of your ancestors in magnificent moulded brass cuirasses helped to make this road.” Probably they had many a time marched with their men, sung

with them, along such a road as this—perhaps along this very road—two thousand years ago—even as he was now (but horribly, grotesquely, inappropriately) marching, singing, *alone*, and with no living thing near him.

‘Then for one second she saw, or thought she saw. Suddenly the old road was full of marching men. She saw the plumed helmets with their long hanging wisps of horsehair, the moulded or imbricated body-armour, the short swords in their bronze and leather scabbards, confidently aslap against those confident marching figures, the signifers holding aloft their symbols of *SPQR*. Now the figure of the man, who had so recently left her side, was no longer grotesque ; he was doing what his nameless, his unremembered ancestors had done two thousand years ago—perhaps—who could tell ?—what he himself had done.

‘A hundred yards beyond the inn the road took a sudden and violent sweep, once more leaving the line of the Roman way, and becoming the twisting road of haphazard settlement, no longer the road of conquest.

‘From her window Geraldine could see the long files of moving figures, under the uncertain light of that hidden moon, leave the road at the bend, taking no account of this modern thing, this twisting expanse of congealed pitch and dolerite, which was nothing to them ; and, moving straight forward in the line the road *once* took, step out over the whinberry roots, and among the thinning trees.

‘Then, with a suddenness as abrupt as that with which dreams change and shuffle their figures, their very landscapes, the night was empty ; the hallucination, or the vision, had disappeared ; there was nothing except the road, over which not even the faintest film of dust hovered, the far noises of the night, the perpetual distant whine and mutter of machinery.

‘At that same moment Geraldine was seized with a terror far greater than that which had assailed her at the sight of the moving figures, but this time a rational terror. What might happen to her husband, where might he go, an unconscious sleep-walker in the darkness? She hurried downstairs, out of the inn, and presently found herself running at the top of her speed, and with a sick and giddy feeling in her brain, up the straight road, past the illuminated sign, over the whinberry roots, between the boles of the silver birches—stumbling, nearly falling, recovering herself; till she was brought up suddenly at the edge of a black shadow, an old and disused marl-pit, which lay in the direct line of the Roman road.

‘Someone had fallen over its edge; for, as she stood there, cursing her headlong stupidity in forgetting her torch, the sound of a faint groaning came up out of the pit. There was no doubt as to what had befallen Marcle.

‘It was the best part of half an hour before he was got out on an improvised stretcher,’ John Shiplake continued, after a rhetorical pause, ‘with, as I said before, five broken ribs and a smashed collar-bone. He was lucky to get off so lightly, for that marl-pit was a particularly foul death-trap. Of course, with the amiable readiness of county authorities to learn from experience, it’s been fenced in since then.’

He paused to light a cigar.

‘It was the best part of four months before they could carry on with their honeymoon; and, as circumstance would have it, they didn’t get to the Hodder Valley till five years afterwards, when I joined them. We got some quite good fishing.’

CARONI.

BY C. W. WARDLAW.

EVEN as adversity shows the true level of a man's character, so environment brings out the essential contrasts of his mind. To the timorous, the Caroni swamp, an extensive coastal area of mangrove and reed-grown mud-flat in the green island of Trinidad, is a place of fearsome possibilities, of insidious infections, malarial mosquitoes, fever-carrying sand-flies, and noisome, debilitating vapours. But to me it is beautiful, infinitely and endlessly varied, and imbued with an air of not unpleasant, brooding melancholy.

By contrast, my friend Mitchell, who incidentally is an excellent shot and fowler generally, is a man obsessed by a strong vein of realism.

'I was down on Caroni the other day,' he remarked to me in the club.

'A grand spot! Did you get any birds?' I asked.

For my special benefit the bag of duck and water-fowl was duly recapitulated, enriched by an exhaustive commentary on matters of feeding, flights and speeds.

'And we saw one remarkable sight,' continued Mitchell. 'We came to a back-water in the mangrove. The tide was out, and right ahead of us, feeding in the mud, were some fifty or sixty flamingo. Their scarlet plumage against the bright green vegetation, and the perfect reflection in the still water, made a marvellous bit of colour.'

'It must have been beautiful!' I interjected.

'Yes, beautiful!' repeated Mitchell sarcastically, 'until you remember what a cesspool of filthy, oozing black mud

and stinking decay the place really is. That's Caroni, my lad ! Stinking, oozing mud !'

There was more in the same vein, though what I have set down is a fair example. Mitchell, as I have remarked, is a man of unblinking realism : the theory that to the pure all things are pure appeals to him not in the very least.

As a matter of fact, the beauty of the scarlet ibis, or flamingo, on the wing must be seen to be believed. On one occasion, in company with my East Indian boatman, Dookal, I had set off for the swamp at daybreak. Behind us the rising sun was sending long horizontal searchlights into the delicate western sky. Then, suddenly, I saw a most remarkable sight. Above the green belt of mangrove, on the distant seaward horizon, a curious pink cloud, like a palely luminous comet, came into view. A circular movement brought this strange cloud nearer to us. Just then the strong sunbeams, breaking through the haze and proclaiming their full effulgence, shone brightly on the moving phalanx. Again there was a wheeling movement, but this time a hundred flapping wings, of the most intense, glinting scarlet could be discerned.

'Flamingos !' said Dookal, pointing over my shoulder.

Once more the birds turned seawards, their wings illumined to a miracle of colour in the sunshine. A moment later they had alighted in the shelter of a belt of mangrove. Such sights are gifts from the gods. On Caroni the gods are generous, to those who rise early and travel softly.

In the capacity of observer I decided to accompany Mitchell on a day's shooting. The sport I knew would be good, the commentary abundant and informative. So, in the parched, superheated lull of the afternoon, we bumped over a rough mud track through fields of rustling sugar-

cane, to alight at a primitive East Indian village, a dozen mud-walled, thatched houses set in the midst of bush and semi-derelict gardens. The River Caroni runs near by, between high banks fringed with tall grasses, black sage, prickly palms, sand-box, bamboo, and ever-competitive vines. The scene of our afternoon's sport was still farther afield, on one of the artificial canals that run at right angles to the stream. There, at an abandoned pumping-station, Dookal and another boatman awaited us.

'How far to the pumping-station?' we asked an East Indian boy who stood by a house door.

'Not too far, sah. Just round the corner. De track on de right.'

The just-round-the-corner walk was true to type, but after a grilling march over the sun-baked, fissured soil, amidst neglected gardens of sweet potatoes, ochroes, pigeon peas and sugar-cane, we arrived, having survived much incidental slipping and stumbling on the rough, obliterated pathway, at the canal. Almost immediately the soothing coolness of the soft wind that swept the marches touched our cheeks, and I again knew the quiet fascination of Caroni.

For greater freedom, Mitchell led off in one punt, while I followed in another with Dookal. After proceeding along the canal for a few hundred yards, Mitchell's boatman headed his craft into the right bank. My own was just behind. It was too late for a shot, but we were in time to see a remarkable sight. Over the bank—an artificial structure thrown up during dredging operations—was an area of semi-open mangrove forest, the most common tree being a tall species encircling whose base, for square yards at a time, was a regiment of upwardly directed breathing-roots. All around, a still, muggy atmosphere, black mud,

gigantic, brown-hued sedges, and fallen branches touched by the hand of decay.

Here and there miniature lakes and channels occupied the areas between the clustered bush, the whole making a unique pattern, a curious maze of waterways and mud-flats. In this steamy seclusion, only a few yards from the bank, a host of birds had been feeding or resting : scarlet ibis, large blue and white herons, egrets, water-fowl and plovers. At the first crackling branch, they were up and away, and one had a momentary vision, fleeting but amazingly beautiful, as the shy creatures with a hectic flapping of wings, scarlet, white, blue and silvery grey, made off through the leafy gaps. Into this region of squelching mud, brittle aerial roots and livid greenery, we made our way, but except for small audacious plovers, no birds returned to test the fowler's skill. It is enough that the memory of those fleeting wings remains with me.

'It would be impossible to recover the birds here, anyway,' remarked Mitchell. Which 'the same,' as Bret Harte would have said, is probably a sporting version of 'sour grapes.'

Farther along the canal, drifting silently on our mirror-world of blue sky and fleeting white cloud, we came to a gap that opened on to the swamp. Before us lay a small lake surrounded by dense thickets of a bushy kind of mangrove. Almost immediately, disturbing the hushed tranquillity, there was a rushing sound, a rhythmic beating of the air, then the resounding bang of Mitchell's gun. A moment later a large scarlet body descended into the canal with a surprising smack. Looking skywards I beheld a flight of ibis, their scarlet and brown plumage a marvellous pageant of colour in the gleaming afternoon sun. Already they were high in the air, but an indiscreet wheeling move-

ment again brought them within range. Mitchell's gun again crashed out. I saw a scarlet body crumple, lose momentum, then plunge downwards into the lake. Heads craning forward and in formation, the ibis streamed across the sky; the sunlight glinted on their scarlet tunics, and in a moment they had disappeared behind some high bush. I felt instinctively that they were too beautiful to be shot down for sport.

Now in our progress the swamp opened out in all its extended desolation. It is astonishing how much such inundated areas may change in the course of a single week. Even though the dry season had been offset by occasional spells of rain, great areas of the swamp, not so long ago a vast, gleaming lakeland, had become partly dried up and at low tide disclosed unappetising bare mud-flats, or quagmires thinly veiled in green scum. Beyond, where a wealth of livid green, water-logged pasturage had flourished, was now a tawny coat of dried reeds, in colour resembling the rich colour of a Scottish moorland in autumn. And, everywhere by the waterside, egret and heron, their plumage waxy and snow-white, stood with long necks stretched in avian contemplation, or rose in wheeling flight when a distant gun shocked the tranquil air.

In a side channel, by a clump of reeds, we moored our boats and had tea. Left and right, fish were constantly disturbing the placid water: cat-fish grunting and foraging among the grass roots; brochet scouring hither and thither just below the surface; and mullet in abundance performing the most amazing leaps into the air. These things we noted with the quiet satisfaction that comes with the replenishing of the inner man. In the other boat our henchmen, too, had given themselves over to the joys of eating, Dookal being hard at work on an enormous dough-like

cake in the centre of which reposed some scraps of curried meat. I had just engaged him in the engrossing topic of compounding curry, and was deep in the mysteries of coriander and turmeric, cardamom and fenugreek, when one of the Indians gave a shout.

‘Stangaray ! Stangaray !’

‘Sting-ray,’ said Mitchell for my edification.

Within six or seven feet of the boat I noticed a curious, strap-like object, sinuously curved, which appeared above the surface of the water for a second or two, to be immersed again and lost to view in the murky depths. Actually I had seen a similar object earlier in the afternoon, but had been unable to resolve it into any creature known to me.

What the black-mamba is to the jungle-wallah, the sting-ray is to the swamp-dweller—a noisome, death-dealing creation to be avoided at all cost. He is practically the *pièce de résistance*. The obscene, broad, flat body, a foot or more across, and long lashing tail, beset with deadly stings, I knew well from my books. Moreover, the sting-ray has not been neglected in the Classics. ‘Nothing is more terrible,’ says Pliny, ‘than the sting that arms the tail of Trygon (the Mediterranean sting-ray)’. When driven into the root of a tree it causes it to wither. It can pierce armour like an arrow, it is as strong as iron, yet possesses venomous properties.’

You may well imagine what it does to frail flesh.

‘Sting-ray,’ said Mitchell, in his crisp, didactic voice, ‘is positively the worst thing you can meet.

‘You know what they’re like,’ he continued. ‘They lie flat in the mud, and when you come near they erect the two tail-stings, so that it’s like stepping on to an upwardly directed dagger. And, mark you, it’s a poisoned dagger ! Filthy fish poison ! Then they begin to lash about with

their tail. The stings are several inches long, sharp as a lance and jagged as a saw. When you get a wound it means blood-poisoning, my lad !’

‘ Did you ever know anyone to be attacked by a sting-ray ? ’ I asked Dookal.

‘ Yes, sir. One man. ’

‘ Where did it get him ? ’

‘ In the calf of the leg, sir. ’

‘ When was the funeral ? ’ I asked, to clinch matters.

‘ Oh, you may be maimed for life, but it doesn’t cause death, ’ put in Mitchell, impatient at my question.

‘ He dead in three months ! ’ replied Dookal promptly.

Over a brief stretch of broken, marshy land, mullet were scouring the water and leaping with unusual zest.

‘ Now would be a good chance to get some mullet, ’ said I.

Whereupon, in spite of our recent highly coloured discourse, Dookal immediately seized his casting net and went plunging through the morass, traversing the very spot where the sting-ray had so recently shown his flag. I could only conclude that he was either quite devoid of imagination or a confirmed believer in the existence of guardian angels.

Later, when the glare departed with the westering sun, and the pensive light of evening cast a new sense of mystery over our flat world, blue-wing duck began to return to feed in favourite haunts. In sixes and sevens they came, sometimes in larger skeins, executing their aerial manoeuvres, swooping and wheeling, with leaders, outfliers and scouts, for all the world like an air-squadron going into action.

In the distance, in a soft reedy patch just hidden from view, they alighted. In pursuit we pulled along a narrow channel, till an area of open water, shallow from the drought,

afforded a means of approaching more closely. Here I pulled my boat on to a reedy anchorage and prepared to watch, while Mitchell's boatman jumped into the water, trousers and all, and pushed him along from behind—a mucky performance, but effective.

Quickly the sky darkened and more and more duck came hurtling landward with their whistling, bullet-like flight. At length, after a commendable exercise of patience, an indiscreet squadron came within range, flying low but at a terrific pace. In the distance I saw Mitchell swing his gun, then—crash ! In quick succession his shots rang out. Next moment his boat-boy was hopping briskly among the reeds.

‘ Not so bad, lad ! ’ he said, when at length he rejoined me. ‘ Got three ! Aren't they just the neatest things ? ’

Later, plover and some muscovy duck offered themselves and were duly added to the day's bag. Then, as we pulled back towards the main canal, our muddy world changed miraculously, as if at the touch of a magician's wand. Purple and mauve and burnt gold filled the sky and was reflected on the water ; sepia, brown madder and ochre became blended together in the reedy wastes ; and in the distance the dark green mangroves stood forth with a new compactness and beauty. Beyond the sculptured blue ridges of the Northern Range, remote and seemingly untenanted in the eerie light, the afterglow filled the heavens with fiery splendour, and one sighed with quiet contentment as those ethereal and unworldly harmonies faded into the obscurity of tropic night.

With the dusk came forth unnumbered legions of small night-flying insects, and darting hither and thither among them, gathering a rich harvest, bats in their thousands. Then came a larger body, now flapping heavily through

the air, now swooping downwards with terrific speed on the foraging bats. Time and again this predator—hawk or owl—crossed our route, descending with such fury that he almost seemed to alight on the bat's back, though we did not see a capture actually effected.

But we had overstayed our time and it was a long row back to the pumping-station—to say nothing of that leg-breaking walk to the car. Soon my boatman had pulled ahead. Nothing disturbed the silence of swampland but the splash of the oars or the occasional hoarse cry of a water-fowl. Now and again a heavy bird, a night heron, most likely, beat the darkness above our heads, intent on some lonely escapade, while mullet and tarpon splashed and flouted the water around us. With the rising tide came a host of the diminutive creatures that impart the phosphorescence to sea water. Every splash of the oars created a wake of strange luminosity, and when mullet executed their quick zigzagging dash through the water, they blazed a gleaming trail of comet-like beauty. There were stars that night, just enough to light the placid water, but otherwise we were adrift in a silent, unreal world, vaguely threatened by unknown obscurity where mangroves reared their dark shapes into the dusky sky.

Belated on the swamp, we had still to negotiate that broken pathway in the dark. An unpleasant anticipation. But at the last moment a solution presented itself. On the Caroni river near by there was a large dug-out canoe. So into this lightly balanced craft we clambered and were soon being propelled upstream by deftly wielded paddles. Overshaded by tall, feathery bamboos, immortelles, palms and bush, and full of unexpected twists and bends, the river-bed was tenfold more mysterious than the canal. 'No light, but darkness visible, served only to discover' not

Miltonic horrors, but the route that must have been taken by many in the early days when the Caroni was the principal highway into the interior. As the paddles dipped and splashed I mused on strange other days when explorers, facing unknown perils, must have navigated those rivers, hoping in the end to return laden with the pilfered treasures of El Dorado.

Even such thoughts and the circumstances of our journey, though dear to the armchair adventurer, do not while away the time sufficiently quickly when you are in a hurry to get home. It seemed that every mile had a hundred twists and turns and that we had a hundred miles to go. But eventually we arrived, and again, in uncharitable blackness, clambered up the slippery bank, to be greeted by the clamour of mongrel curs that rushed round our legs with yapping frenzy.

And so home to tell the tale.

Trinidad.

BY THE WAY.

IF 1936 will go down to history as the Year of the Three Kings, so may 1937 go down as the Year of the Three Wars : Abyssinia, it is true, had been crushed as a country before 1937 began, but it can hardly even yet be called a land of peace ; civil war had broken out in Spain in the autumn of 1936, but still continues unabated ; Japan is now ' punishing ' China. One of the oddest and most ominous features of all three fields of strife is that in none of them was war declared. As it is now a disadvantage to declare war and so proclaim oneself the aggressor, the simple course is following of going to war without a declaration—and we may expect the precedent to be followed hereafter. In each of the three cases the English view has been, if not unanimous, at all events predominantly expressed : the dignity and defencelessness of the Abyssinians were everywhere contrasted with the swank and armaments of their attackers ; in Spain, whilst at first most here seemed to favour General Franco, his ruthless aerial bombardments of the Basques swung opinion round to the view that there was precious little to choose between the two sides ; in China no one could be found to justify or to do other than execrate the Japanese methods. It is easy, it seems, to make territorial gains at the cost of national honour—not so easy to forecast the ultimate balance as between these two. The two things that have emerged on the hopeful side are, first, American concern for the civilisation of the world and, secondly, that nothing can now conceal even from the most ignorant that war is not merely bestial but includes in its destruction the

civilian and the combatant, the just and the unjust. Such a realisation alone may prevent its further and irreparable devastations in the crowded cities of Europe.

* * *

Readers of the August issue may remember that on pages 282-4 I quoted some lines from a 'modernistic' poem that no one to whom I had shown them could understand at all, and I also set out below these a poem of a similar kind and invited the Editor of *Life and Letters To-day* to decide whether the two sets were lunatic or masterly. Not unnaturally he evaded the invitation with skill, but now that the *Fortnightly Review* has made kindly reference to my 'temerity' and assumed that both sets of lines were from *Life and Letters To-day*, I must add that a young writer of talent and discernment, shown both, averred that, though he could not quite understand the first, he felt the second to be 'magnificent.' The tribute is much appreciated, but 'magnificence' is not in reality difficult of achievement. The recipe is as follows : empty the mind, allow entrance to such words as wish for it, write them down, cut the lines into varying lengths, dividing by a hyphen at will, abstain from all punctuation, and serve hot. If I ever publish the second effusion in a collection, it will be called 'Poetry à la Mode, 1937': I retain the copyright.

* * *

The following extract is taken from a well-known paper : 'poets and such fellows, whose very living depends on a graceful and specious denial of the obvious and brutal facts of existence, have always sentimentalised over village life.' The writer obviously is unaware of the work of either Shakespeare or Dante—to name no more of the illustrious ; he is also, it would seem, not a reader of that con-

siderable section of the work of to-day, which denies that there is anything in life, whether in village or town, which is not both 'obvious and brutal.'

* * *

Overheard in London : ' Oh, we had a lovely afternoon ! We each tried on twenty hats and had the mannequin try on the rest.'

* * *

' Of the making of books there is no end '—on which R. L. Stevenson remarks that the Psalmist did not therein perceive how highly he was praising the profession of literature. No doubt : he also did not perceive what a comment he was indirectly passing upon the difficulties and labours of editors and reviewers. It would be wholly impossible for anyone, however industrious, to play the critic in respect of all the books published for the late autumn and Christmas season ; he could not even select for careful perusal all the books of that which are worth while. In such pages as these all that I can attempt to do is to mention a few of the current books which seem to me, for one reason or another, to be deserving of attention, either for personal reading or for giving to others. I might perhaps just interpolate—being of course utterly disinterested, as all publishers, editors, and authors naturally are—that I cannot understand why the slogan (to make use in this commercial connection of an odiously overworked word) ' Buy more books ' is not in universal use. We have such irrelevancies as ' Buy more bananas ' constantly thrust upon us ; but as a matter of fact whilst one can become sick, literally, of bananas, one can never have enough books—even in spite of the classic reply, ' Thanks, I have one.' In sober truth most people like books as presents, and there is the Book

Token Scheme to avoid redundancies. So here at least follow a few 'honourable mentions' for Christmas shoppers.

* * *

Let me take first of all a group of books on nature subjects—for this is the season when, comfortably installed in arm-chairs in front of the fire (in homes still so old-fashioned as to have one), we enjoy reading about the life all about us, and mostly unnoticed, in the warmer seasons. Readers of CORNHILL will remember Phyllis Kelway on hedgehogs and shrews and her *Hedge Folk in Twilight* was delightful; now she gives us *Swift Movement in the Trees (and at their Roots)* (Longmans, 6s. n.), mostly of squirrels, but also of other wee beasties, toads, and moorhens—which is equally delightful. Another is Phyllis Bond's *Watching Wild Life* (Longmans, 6s. n.), a very useful little book, telling the reader what to look for and how to look and also how to listen—an art not nearly enough practised. With this must be coupled *Forth from the Wilderness* (Moray Press, 7s. 6d. n.), in which 'Iolaire' writes attractively of observation of birds in East Lothian, month by month. For fishermen and others comes from that well-known writer in CORNHILL under the name of 'Hafren,' R. D'Oyley Hemingway, a volume of reminiscences, *Memories Fresh and Salt* (Heath Cranton, 6s. n.): here will be found collected not only that engaging series of articles on the never-ended subject of 'Fisherman's Luck,' good, bad and indifferent, but a number of other articles, complementary to the author's *Fly Fishing for Trout* and to be enjoyed by more than anglers: at all events, a book which easily solves the Christmas problem for some folk.

It is an easy transition from books on natural history to books on our countryside, and indeed the transition is made easier even than usual by the appearance of *Jefferies' England*

(Constable, 8s. 6d. n.), in which Samuel J. Looker has collected together, and Will F. Taylor has illustrated by many excellent photographs, thirty-one of Jefferies's essays. Mr. Looker writes simply that the purpose of his book 'is to show the real Jefferies whose work will survive'—there can be little doubt that this purpose is successfully and felicitously achieved. Here, too, I must mention Jefferies's *Hodge and his Masters* (Methuen, 7s. 6d. n.), which Henry Williamson has revised : one may question the propriety of such revision, even if it be true, as Mr. Williamson maintains, that Jefferies, had he lived, would have recast it in some such way ; but at least the revision is done with loving knowledge, in the hope that new readers will be found for this very interesting account of more than fifty years ago. Very different both from Jefferies and his editors is John Gibbons, who now devotes his caustic, controversial observations to *My Own Queer Country* (Methuen, 10s. 6d. n.). He wanders at will amongst the places and customs of our land and writes freshly and provocatively about it : I particularly like the directness and the truth, for instance, of this :

'I think I should tell the inquiring visitor in search of the Typical English Scenery that there is no such thing ; I know my country fairly well from Essex to Cornwall and from Cumberland to Kent, and I should say that we could show more contrasts cleverly packed into a comparatively small country than would be found anywhere else in the world. . . . The man who wants the Highest Mountain Ever or the Longest Lake had better go back to America ; our English stock lies in quality rather than in quantity.'

Later, 'instead of Birthday Honours,' he writes, 'I would have a weekly list of Dishonours'—and throughout his is an agreeable, stimulating book. Lady Carbery's *The Farm by Lough Gur* (Longmans, 10s. 6d. n.) carries, says Mr. Shane

Leslie in his introduction, 'all the mists and memories, all the scent and sting of the Irish countryside'; it is a large claim, but one that perhaps an Englishman has no right to dispute, and certainly it will not be only the Irish reader that will be gathered into the interest and delicacy of these rural recollections which go back to the '60's.

Three other books I must mention which cannot well be grouped. There is one to make the heart contract as the memories stir, the simple, moving account of the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission for the last twenty years, justly entitled *The Immortal Heritage*, and most fittingly written by Sir Fabian Ware (Cambridge University Press, 2s. 6d. n.). Mr. Edmund Blunden contributes a dignified introduction and the book is beautifully illustrated—in all respects a worthy account of a great task. From that I pass by complete contrast to *Town and County* (Lovat Dickson, 7s. 6d. n.), with its sub-title of 'Forty years in private service with the aristocracy,' by C. W. Cooper, butler to Sir Anthony Wingfield, a very nicely got-up little book with many amusing illustrations by J. S. Goodall. Mr. Cooper says that some twelve years ago he 'was taught to be cautious,' so it is not a chronicle of scandal, though he 'did meet one titled lady of a very old family who was most objectionable': a nice touch earlier is 'Queen Victoria came once or twice to tea [at Cumberland Lodge] but no fuss was made.' The third book of this incongruous trio is yet another translation of Homer, namely, Dr. W. H. D. Rouse's *The Story of Odysseus* (Nelson, 7s. 6d. n.) 'translated into plain English.' I feel a little bit doubtful of the wisdom of the various recent attempts to 'popularise' Homer, but at any rate there is no one better qualified for such than Dr. Rouse, and if his work, which is undeniably lively as well as faithful, sends new readers to the classics it is well

justified : I found the article on 'Homer's Words' following the story as interesting a part of the book as any.

And so from much-travelled Odysseus to the moderns. Author-travellers to-day are many : perhaps they always have been, but in past times those who could write really well and interestingly as well as journey adventurously were few, and now one is constantly puzzled whether to admire most the journey itself or the account of it ; and, furthermore, what photographers these author-travellers are ! Here are four new books of this description to choose from. Freya Stark's *Baghdad Sketches* (Murray, 12s. 6d. n.) preserving, with recent additions, what she first wrote of her life in that fascinating city in 1931 : Miss Stark's reputation is assured and this collection is worthy of it. Then there is H. G. Quaritch Wales's *Toward Angkor* (Harrap, 12s. 6d. n.), a learned, but not dry, book of a little known part of the world, for the authority of which Sir Francis Young-husband stands sponsor. Patrick Balfour, on the other hand, is no specialist or explorer ; his *Lady of the Equator* (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d. n.) is a lively account of a journey across Equatorial Africa, with particular attention to the mandated territories. And, fourthly, there is *Peruvian Pageant* (Murray, 16s. n.), by Blair Niles, described as 'a journey in Time,' since the author writes not only of Peru to-day but also of Peru of the Incas : her photographs are taken by Robert Niles and the other authors take their own ; it would be invidious to give a first prize where there is such a multitude of excellence.

And, finally, fiction, for which there is only space out of proportion entirely, I freely acknowledge, to the piles in every bookshop. I can here select but three, first one by an author not unfamiliar to readers of CORNHILL, Myrtle Johnston, who has just published *Låleen and other Stories*

(Murray, 7s. 6d. n.). When 'Lāleen' was first published in these columns I felt it to be a story of quite unusual charm, and it ~~does~~ not stand alone : Miss Johnston's work is often tense, often beautiful, and always interesting. Leonora Starr has also had work in CORNHILL, and many will no doubt remember her first book, *Colonel's Lady*, a lively and attractive account of Army life ; she has now followed that up with a first novel, *Hear the Bugle* (Bell, 7s. 6d. n.), which is more than good ; it is a story which will be thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who has any knowledge of or interest in the life of our soldiers during peace. Thirdly, and with the same commendation, I must mention *The Sword and the Rose* (Davies, 8s. 6d. n.) by A. W. Smith : the appearance of this in the same autumn season as *Hear the Bugle* is of special interest ; as the latter is the Army viewed from the point of view and knowledge of an officer's wife, so is *The Sword and the Rose* essentially a masculine view. The contrast of treatment is worth attention, and not the contrast alone ; both books are admirable studies, and if the work of A. W. Smith is the stronger and more dramatic that is in accordance with expectations—a very admirable pair of novels indeed.

One book more, the book of books : it is encouraging to find that even to-day when we are continually told that the age of religion is over, in spite of Voltaire's caustic jest, the great book of the world can still be a 'best seller.' The new edition bears the explanatory title, *The Bible designed to be read as Literature* (though what else it could be I do not know), edited and arranged by Ernest Sutherland Bates ~~with~~ an introduction by Laurence Binyon (Heinemann, 10s. 6d. n.). A beautiful bit of printing and a joy to read—but it remains a pity that it is not the complete Bible.